NATION

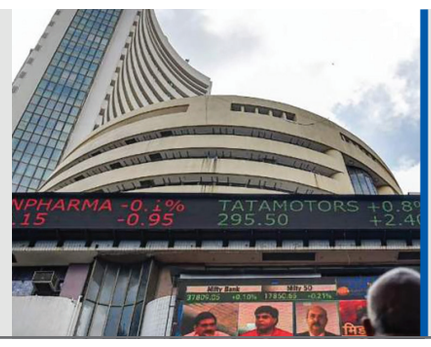
138 people missing in Wayanad landslides: Draft list

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Market snaps 3-day slump on value buying

≫ Page: 7 ≪



SPORTS

Morata & Rodri banned for 'Gibraltar is Spanish' chant

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 8 AUGUST 2024 | THURSDAY | BENGALURU | 2 SAFAR, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 196 | Pages: 8

WE ARE HIRING

REPORTER
WEB-EDITOR
DESIGNER

Journalism degree preferred but not essential.

Reporter: 4-6 years experience.

Designer and web-editor: 2-4 years experience.

SEND YOUR CV TO:

hr.salarnews@gmail.com
anushreeirwin@gmail.com

INDIA HEARTBROKEN AS VINESH IS DISQUALIFIED

Billion hearts break as 100g weigh down Vinesh's Gold dream

PARIS, 7 AUG

An entire nation's hopes were crushed under the weight of 100g.

With hours to go before her gold medal bout on Wednesday, Vinesh Phogat stood on the scale: the figures on display were horrifying. For her 50kg category fight, she was 100g overweight, leading to an automatic disqualification on perhaps the biggest day of her sporting career.

Dehydrated after three gruelling bouts on Tuesday, a desperate Vinesh merely had "small amounts of water", cut her hair, and stayed up all night working out to ensure that she didn't go over the prescribed limit for her weight.

It wasn't enough and no amount of pleading by the Indian officials to get her some more time to shed those 100g could change the rules.

So that's how it stayed, ending Vinesh's resilient run during, which she took down the reigning gold-medallist only to be beaten by her own battered body.

This was her third Games appearance and maybe the last one too. The first in Rio 2016 ended with her being stretchered off due to a career-threatening injury, while the second outing in Tokyo also halted painfully with an unexpected early loss.

India lodged a "strong protest" with United World Wrestling (UWW). UWW said nothing could be done about Vinesh's disqualification.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to lodge a strong protest with the organisers of the Paris Olympics The protests and appeals can continue but the cold fact was that Cuban wrestler Yusneylis Guzman Lopez, who lost to Vinesh in the semi-finals, replaced her in the final.

Contingent's Chief Medical Officer Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala wore a dejected look as he tried to explain the process of weight cutting. He said that every possible trick was used to ensure that Vinesh could be within the prescribed limit.

Pardiwala revealed that Vinesh's post participation weight had increased on Tuesday night and drastic measures such as cutting off her hair were taken. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 5 & 8

Vinesh Phogat had small amounts of water, cut her hair and worked out all night to ensure that she didn't go over weight limit ***PHOTO: X***

Remember, this moment does not diminish your countless achievements and the pride you have brought to India. Stay strong, Vinesh. We believe in you and your incredible journey. You will always be our champion

—Siddaramaiah, Karnataka Chief Minister

You are India's pride and an inspiration for each and every Indian. Today's setback hurts. I know that you epitomise resilience. It has always been your nature to take challenges head on. Come back stronger! We are all rooting for you

—Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Neeraj gears up for a golden throw

PARIS, 7 AUG

India's defending champion and World Championships gold medalist Neeraj Chopra laid out the differences between playing at Tokyo Olympics in 2020 and in Paris this year and also said that defending his title serves as a motivation to him. On the challenge of defending his title, Neeraj stated: "Being defending champion is motivation and I need to be prepared. The mind should be focused on doing the job at hand." Talking about his throw during the qualification round, Neeraj said that though his throw was good, the final remains the "real deal". Chopra registered a huge throw of 89.34 metres in Group B of the men's javelin throw qualification round at the Olympics on Tuesday and made his way into the finals. —*ANI*

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Lok Sabha clears Finance Bill

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Finance Bill 2024 after the government relaxed the just-introduced new capital gains tax on real estate, allowing taxpayers an option to switch to a new lower tax rate or stay with the old regime that had higher rate with indexation benefit.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who in her Budget for 2024-25 proposed to lower the long-term capital gains tax on real estate to 12.5 per cent from 20 per cent but without the indexation benefit, moved an amendment to the bill to give the option. Indexation benefit allows taxpayers to arrive at the cost price of the property after adjusting for inflation.

The amendment came after the new provision was criticised for raising tax incidence and disincentivising investments in the real estate.

The major amendment in the Bill relates to restoration of indexation benefit on sale of properties bought prior to 23 July, 2024. Now, individuals or HuFs who purchased houses before July 23, 2024, can opt to pay LTCG tax under the new scheme at the rate of 12.5 per cent without indexation or claim the indexation benefit and pay 20 per cent tax. The Lower House later approved the bill with 45 official amendments by voice vote. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

HANDLOOM DAY

An artisan weaves fabric on a traditional handloom during the 10th National Handloom Day celebrations at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Wednesday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Elections to 12 Rajya Sabha seats on 3 September: EC

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Elections to 12 vacant Rajya Sabha seats in nine states will be held on September 3, the Election Commission said on Wednesday. Ten Rajya Sabha seats fell vacant as the sitting members, including Union Ministers Piyush Goyal, Sarbananda Sonowal and Jyotiraditya Scindia, were elected to the Lok Sabha. The notification for the Rajya Sabha elections will be issued on 14 August and the last date for filing of poll papers is 21 August, the Commission said. The separate elections for each Rajya Sabha seat will be held on 3 September and the results will be announced the same day. —*PTI*

ATS seizes liquid drugs worth Rs 831 crore from Thane

AHMEDABAD, 7 AUG

The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) conducted a raid at a mephedrone manufacturing unit in Thane district and seized liquid drug worth Rs 800 crore, an official said on Wednesday. It also carried out a similar operation at a pharmaceutical factory in Bharuch district of Gujarat, where it recovered liquid Tramadol worth Rs 31 crore. During its operations on 5 and 6 August, the ATS nabbed four people who were involved in the production and sale of these narcotic substances which are banned under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, said Sunil Joshi, Deputy Inspector General of Police, ATS. —*PTI*

Ch'garh to get its 4th tiger reserve; 3rd largest in India

RAIPUR, 7 AUG

The Chhattisgarh government on Wednesday decided to declare a new tiger reserve covering areas of Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary in the state to promote eco-tourism and create jobs, an official said. This will be the fourth tiger reserve in the state after Indravati (in Bijapur district), Udanti-Sitanadi (Gariaband) and Achanakmar (Mungeli). The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had given its in-principle approval to the project in 2014. The decision was taken in the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai here at his official residence, he said. Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla tiger reserve will be the country's third largest tiger reserve spread over 2,829.387sqkm. —*PTI*

BANGLADESH ON BOIL

Bangladeshis throng India border seeking refuge

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Hundreds of Bangladeshi nationals gathered at the international border with India in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district on Wednesday, seeking to crossover claiming that they were under attack in their country, officials said.

The incident happened near Dakshin Berubari village in the Jhaportala border outpost area, they said, adding that the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) later took them back.

A local said that those gathered across the barbed wire were pleading to let them in.

Non-essential staffers at the Indian High Commission in Dhaka and their family members are returning to India on a voluntary basis through commercial flights, official sources said on Wednesday.

However, all Indian diplomats at the mission are operating from the Bangladesh capital, they said. A special Air India flight brought 205 people, including 6 infants, from Dhaka to New Delhi on Wednesday morning, an official said. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 6

The incident happened near Dakshin Berubari village in the Jhaportala border outpost area ***PHOTO: X/@BEATSINBRIEF***

Hasina to stay in Delhi 'for a while', says her son

DHAKA, 7 AUG

Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who fled to India following mass protests against her government, is going to stay in Delhi "for a little while," her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy said on Wednesday.

Hasina, landed at an airbase near Delhi on Monday and later shifted to a safe location in Delhi under tight security.

In a video interview with German broadcaster Deutsche Welle, Joy was asked about Hasina's reported plans to seek asylum in a third country.

Hasina's daughter Saima Wazed is World Health Organisation's Regional Director for the South-East Asia Region, which has its headquarters in New Delhi.

Hasina's plan to travel to London has hit a roadblock following the UK's hesitation to provide her refuge. Rehana's daughter Tulip Siddiq is a member of the British Parliament. —*PTI*

25 Karnataka students return home safely from B'desh

As many as 25 students pursuing their studies in strife-ridden Bangladesh have returned to their home town on Wednesday, authorities said. The parents of the children were worried about the safety of their children ever since the neighbouring country plunged into turmoil. They had even approached public representatives to bring their children back home. A few students said they had been unable to contact their parents as the communication network was disrupted. The Indian Embassy helped these students return home safely, the authorities said. —*PTI*

In a 1st, biochemist Padmanabhan to get Vigyan Ratna

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Celebrated biochemist Govindarajan Padmanabhan has been selected for first Vigyan Ratna Puraskar, the top most science award instituted by the government this year.

The government on Wednesday announced 33 Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskars, which include 18 Vigyan Yuva Puraskars for young scientists and 13 Vigyan Shri Puraskars and a Vigyan Team award that went to Team Chandrayaan-3.

The awards will be given every year and replace the 300-odd awards that were given by various science departments. President Droupadi Murmu is expected to confer the awards on 23 August, the National Space Day, to mark the landing of Chandrayaan-3 near the south pole of the moon.

Earlier this year, the government had instituted the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar recognising outstanding contributions of researchers, technologists and innovators in the field of science, technology and innovation. —*PTI*

'FOCUS ON QUALITY'

5,000 laundering cases, 40 convictions: ED gets SC rap

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Citing low conviction rate in money laundering cases, the Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to focus on quality of prosecution and evidence.

Referring to a statement made in Parliament, a three-judge bench of Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta, and Ujjal Bhuyan said the ED should do some scientific investigation to increase the conviction rate.

- Union Ministry of Home Affairs informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday that a total of 5,297 cases were lodged under the PMLA by the ED between 2014 and 2024.

Union Ministry of Home Affairs informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday that a total of 5,297 cases were lodged under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) by the ED between 2014 and 2024 while conviction was secured in 40 cases.

The top court was hearing a bail plea filed by a Chhattisgarh-based businessman, who was arrested in connection with a money laundering case involving illegal levy on coal transportation.

"You need to concentrate on the quality of prosecution and evidence. All the cases where you are satisfied that a prima facie case is made out, you need to establish those cases in the court, the bench told Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the ED.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the petitioner, stated that in Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's case, the top court has held that "reasons to believe", besides grounds of arrest, have to be supplied to the accused. —*PTI*

The top court was hearing a bail plea filed by a Chhattisgarh-based businessman arrested in money laundering case ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

Clamour for CM's resignation on as BJP-JD(S) march enters 5th day

Guv is weighing options vis-a-vis the petition seeking sanction for CM's prosecution

MANDYA, 7 AUG

BJP and JD(S)' clamour for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's resignation, over the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam' continued, with their protest march entering fifth day on Wednesday.

Opposition has stepped up its campaign against Congress government at a time when Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot is said to be weighing options vis-a-vis the petition seeking sanction for Chief Minister's prosecution in connection with the 'scam', after his Cabinet urged him to withdraw showcause notice to Siddaramaiah.

The week-long Bengaluru -Mysuru 'padayatra' (foot march) has sought to highlight the alleged fraudulent allotment of sites to land losers by MUDA, including to Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi.

BJP State President BY Vijayendra with other party leaders during 'Mysuru Chalo' padayatra from Maddur to Mandya on Wednesday **PHOTO: SALAR**

The fifth day of the 'Mysuru Chalo' protest march began here, and is scheduled to cover a distance of 15km to reach Tubinakere.

BJP State President and MLA BY Vijayendra, JD (S) State President and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, several legislators, leaders and workers from both parties took part as the march resumed.

Addressing the gathering during the march, Ashoka said the poor and middle class have to face great difficulty to get one 30 feet by 40 feet residential site, but Siddaramaiah has secured 14 sites of 50x70 dimension from MUDA, that too at a prime locality.

Siddaramaiah is "involved in this scam at every level" and that's the reason BJP and JD(S) are protesting, he said, adding, "this fight is against Siddaramaiah's loot and to give back the sites that were taken by Siddaramaiah and his followers....this is Rs 4,000-Rs 5000 crore scam."

Kumaraswamy said Congress that came to power promising to give transparent government during the Assembly polls, indulged in loot within 24 hours of assuming office.

There was "anti-incumbency" against the Congress government within a few days after it came to power, he said, as he targeted Siddaramaiah and his government for both MUDA and Valmiki Development Corporation 'scams.'

—PTI

CM confident that Governor will reject petition seeing prosecution

MYSURU, 7 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said he is confident the Governor will be "convinced", and will reject the petition seeking sanction for prosecution against him in connection with the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam', as everything is legal and as per the Constitution. Based on a petition filed by advocate-activist TJ Abraham, the Governor had issued "showcause notice" on 26 July directing the Chief Minister to submit his reply to the allegations against him within seven days, as to why permission for prosecution should not be granted against him. *—PTI*

BSY, FACING POCSO CASE, SHOULD RETIRE, SAYS CM

MYSURU, 7 AUG

Questioning veteran BJP leader BS Yediyurappa's "moral right" to demand his resignation in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam', Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday urged that the former should retire from public life as he is an accused in a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act case.

Yediyurappa had recently demanded that Siddaramaiah has to resign before BJP-JD(S)' protest march from Bengaluru against the MUDA site allotment 'scam' reaches Mysuru.

"Because of the court's mercy he is outside and not in jail. One cannot get bail in such cases," Siddaramaiah said.

The case was registered on 14 March this year based on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl who alleged that Yediyurappa sexually assaulted her daughter during a meeting on 2 February, at his residence in Dollars Colony here. *—Salar News*

Bridge over Kali River collapses, traffic disrupted

PANAJI/KARWAR, 7 AUG

An old bridge across Kali River in Uttara Kannada district collapsed in the small hours of Wednesday, resulting in heavy traffic along National Highway 66, connecting Goa to Karnataka.

A large portion of the bridge near here caved in around 1.30am when a truck was crossing it, leaving the driver of the vehicle injured as he fell into the river, Karwar police said.

According to officials, the bridge was used for Goa-bound traffic after the construction of a new one a decade ago.

The truck, en route to Karwar, fell into the water, police said, adding that the night patrol team alerted higher police officials.

Traffic on the new bridge was stopped for some time following the incident. Later, vehicles, except heavy ones, were allowed to pass through, the Karwar police said.

Traffic movement on the new bridge was restricted as the authorities were checking its stability after the collapse of the old bridge, Goa's Canacona police station in-charge Harish Raut Desai said.

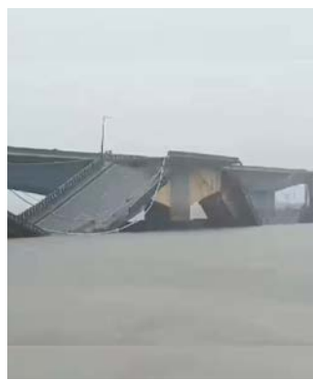
An FIR has also been registered over the bridge collapse.

Following the incident, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah called Deputy Commissioner of Uttara Kannada, Lakshmi Priya K and instructed her to ensure the safety of all bridges and roads in the district and to take precautions to prevent any loss of life.

According to her, the truck driver who was injured in the bridge collapse, has been admitted to the hospital and information has been given to the concerned authorities for immediate action in respect of the bridge.

An official letter has been sent to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to check the strength of the new bridge immediately.

The letter stated that the old Kali river bridge connecting Karwar and Sadashivgad collapsed on 7 August at 1.30 am. *—PTI*



The bridge was used for Goa-bound traffic after the construction of a new one **PHOTO: PTI**

Canara Bank gives ₹1cr aid to Wayanad

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

Canara Bank on Wednesday announced a contribution of Rs 1 crore to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund in support of the relief and rehabilitation efforts in the wake of the devastating landslides in Wayanad, Kerala. "The devastation caused by the floods in Kerala is heart-wrenching, and we are committed to extending all possible support to the affected people. This contribution is a small step towards rebuilding lives and restoring hope," Canara Bank MD and CEO K Satyanarayana Raju said in a press statement. The contribution, drawn from Canara Bank's Corporate Social Responsibility funds, is directed towards the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund as an aid in the ongoing relief-and-recovery efforts after the recent disaster in Wayanad, it said. *—PTI*

Gear up for Independence Day: BBMP Chief

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath had issued detailed instructions to ensure the successful execution of the State-level Independence Day celebrations in a meeting held at the corporation's head office on Wednesday. The event is scheduled to take place at the Manik Shah Parade Ground. Addressing the meeting, the Chief Commissioner instructed officials to ensure that all cultural programmes are rehearsed adequately and that food and drinking water arrangements are efficiently managed at that time. "There should be no confusion regarding seating arrangements, entry points, parking, and route changes," he said. He called for maintaining complete cleanliness within the premises and its surroundings. On the occasion of the Independence Day celebrations, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will recognise 80 individuals for their exceptional contribution to organ donation. Special Commissioner Avinash Menon Rajendran, along with other key officials including Zonal Commissioners Snehal Preeti Gehlot, Vinoth Priya, and Ramya; Bengaluru City District Collector Danayand and Deputy Commissioner Manjunath Swamy, were present at the meeting. They are responsible for coordinating with various departments including the Public Works Department, Police Department, Water Board, and the Kannada and Culture Department to ensure that the event is executed flawlessly *—Salar News*

Metro status for B'luru denied

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

The IT hub Bengaluru has once again been denied the much-sought Metro status by Central government. The Capital City of Karnataka, known for its booming technology sector and rapid urbanisation, remains outside the desired category which includes four other major cities — Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai — in the country.

During the current monsoon session of Parliament, Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said Bengaluru would not be granted Metro status this time. Chaudhary referenced Rule 2A of Income Tax Rules, 1962, which differentiates between existing metro cities and others. This distinction impacts tax benefits, particularly regarding House Rent Allowance (HRA).

PHOTO: PTI

The metro designation carries financial advantages. For residents in metro cities, 50 per cent of their salary is considered for HRA tax exemptions under section 10(13A), compared to 40 per cent for those in non-metro areas. Bengaluru's exclusion means that its residents will continue to face higher tax liabilities compared to their counterparts in cities with metro status. Chaudhary said the government cannot yet grant metro status, citing existing policies and distinctions. "It has been the stated policy of the government to rationalise tax rates and move away from exemptions and deductions. Therefore, designating more cities as metro cities and extending the benefit of a higher exemption limit on HRA to such cities contradicts the stated policy," Chaudhary said. *—Salar News*

Govt to recruit 650 Assistant Professors and 1,200 nurses

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

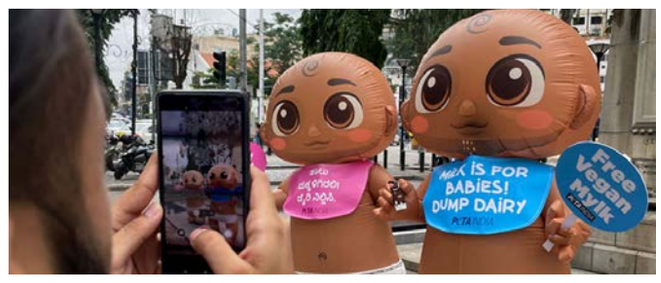
Karnataka Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil on Wednesday issued directions to recruit 650 assistant professors and 1,200 nurses.

These posts will be filled through competitive exams by the Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA), he said.

Patil held a meeting with officials of the department where he directed them to take steps to conduct the exams in a transparent manner and fill the vacant posts in the 33 government institutions coming under it -- 22 medical colleges and 11 super specialty hospitals -- across the state. The Minister said the department's recruitment bylaws would be amended to pave the way for KEA to conduct tests for these vacant posts. *—Salar News*

Sharan Prakash Patil **PHOTO: PTI**

WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK



Members of PETA wearing inflatable infant costumes hand out packets of ice-cold mylk (milk made from nuts or other plants) on the occasion of World Breastfeeding Week, in Bengaluru **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Ditch dairy products: PETA

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India and Aashray Foundation took to the streets of Bengaluru on Wednesday to protest against dairy consumption.

The protest, marking World Breastfeeding Week (1 to 7 August), was held at World War Memorial in Ashok Nagar. Two supporters donned 2.5-metre-tall inflatable baby costumes to deliver a message: "Milk Is for Babies! Dump Dairy." They distributed packets of ice-cold mylk (plant-based milk) from Nourish You company.

The campaign highlights the similarity between human and animal lactation. Dr Kiran Ahuja, PETA India's Nutritionist and Manager of Vegan Projects, said, "Just like human mothers, cows produce milk only to feed their young. But their calves are torn away from them so that the nourishment meant for them can be stolen and sold to humans."

Dr Ahuja urged people to embrace plant-based alternatives. PETA India emphasised the health and environmental benefits of a dairy-free diet. According to Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, vegans are at a reduced risk of health problems, including heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers.

Additionally, research from the University of Oxford indicates that a plant-based diet can significantly reduce an individual's carbon footprint by up to 73 per cent. "For those seeking dairy alternatives, a wide range of plant-based mylks — made from nuts, oats, seeds, millet, soy, rice, and more — are available, offering both nutritional benefits and taste," PETA said. *—Salar News*

Darshan faces new trouble in murder case

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

In a significant development in Renukaswamy murder case, Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) has confirmed that blood stains found on actor Darshan's clothing match with those of the victim.

The forensic analysis was conducted on a pair of blue jeans and a black round-neck shirt that were seized from Darshan's residence by police. A separate incident in Raichur has ignited public outrage. At Lakshmi Ranganath Temple in Masarakal village, Raichur, the priests performed a ritual after placing the photo of Darshan alongside a deity's idol.

The inclusion of Darshan's image in a religious context, especially while he is under arrest and facing serious charges, has been deemed inappropriate by many arguing that it disrespects religious sentiments and deviates from traditional Kannada cultural norms. Ashok Kumar Jain, a pro-Kannada activist, has called for an apology from the temple priests, asserting that such actions tarnish the sanctity of the temple and misrepresent cultural values. *—Salar News*

Darshan **PHOTO: PTI**

- The inclusion of Darshan's image in a religious context, especially while he is under arrest and facing serious charges, has been deemed inappropriate by many arguing that it disrespects religious sentiments

PREGNANT WOMAN, UNBORN BABY DIE IN ACCIDENT

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

A pregnant woman and her unborn child died after the motorbike they were riding in was knocked off by a speeding truck on National Highway 4 near Edehalli in Nelamangala taluk, Bengaluru Rural district, on Wednesday morning.

Sinchana, 30, was pillion riding the motorcycle driven by her husband, Manjunath. A speeding tipper truck hit them and Sinchana was thrown off the bike. Due to the impact of the accident, the child came out of the womb, but it succumbed to injuries.

The couple was en route to their village after a visit to Sivagange Harake Sri Ganapati Temple in Dobbaspet to offer prayers for a safe delivery, as the delivery date was scheduled on 17 August.

The tipper driver fled the scene after the accident and Nelamangala Traffic Police have registered a case. *—Salar News*

Metro records highest footfall on 6 Aug

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

Surpassing previous ridership records, the Bengaluru Metro registered its highest footfall of 8.26 lakhs on 6 August, officials said on Wednesday. In a statement, the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) said as many as 8,26,883 people travelled by Metro rail.

"Surpassing the previous ridership records, on 6 August, Bengaluru Metro recorded a highest footfall of 8.26 lakhs. Earlier ridership record was 8.25 lakhs on August 15, 2022," a metro official said.

In June 2024, a total of 2,23,69,774 passengers used the metro services. The previous single-day ridership record was set on June 19, with 8,08,071 passengers. 3 June marked the highest revenue day, with earnings of Rs 2.51 crore. *—PTI*

CHARGES OF BLACKMAIL

Ex-police informant held for extortion

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

A 35-year-old former police informant has been arrested on charges of extortion and blackmail in City.

Syed Sarfaraz Ahmed, who resided at Bharati Nagar, is accused of using his connections in the police force to lodge false complaints of human rights violations.

The arrest follows an incident on 24 July, when police detained Irshad at Shivajinagar police station for creating a disturbance and violating Arms Act. The next day, a Deputy Superintendent from Karnataka State Human Rights Commission visited the station in response to a complaint alleging illegal detention. After reviewing the case, the officer found no evidence of police misconduct.

Syed Sarfaraz Ahmed is accused of using his connections in the police force to lodge false complaints of human rights violations **PHOTO: PTI**

However, suspicions arose when it came to light that similar complaints had been made against police stations in Hennur, RT Nagar, Shivajinagar and Ramamurthy Nagar. The situation intensified when Shivajinagar police received information from another informant that Ahmed was soliciting Rs 50,000 to withdraw his false complaint.

Police set up a sting operation. They faked an agreement to Ahmed's demands and arrested him when he arrived.

During interrogation, Ahmed admitted to running similar extortions across police stations, particularly in East, Northeast and Whitefield divisions. A police official said, "Ahmed, who was an informant, had built a network of lower-ranking police personnel, especially within the crime units, who supplied him with information. He frequented police stations to gather details on detainees and then exploited this information to file false cases with KSHRC, demanding money to retract his complaints once officers were under scrutiny."

Police have filed an FIR against him under sections 308 (2) for extortion and 132 for assaulting a public servant, under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. *—Salar News*

Govt enforces new food safety regulations in City

BENGALURU, 7 AUG

Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dinesh Gundu Rao has announced a set of measures to combat the use of artificial colours and chemicals in food across eateries and malls in City. This initiative follows a series of inspections revealing that some establishments have been using harmful additives in their food, compromising public health.

During a meeting with hotel and mall owners on Wednesday, Minister Rao emphasised the urgent need to maintain high food safety standards. Under the new guidelines, hotels, restaurants and bakeries are required to prominently display their registration and permits. Establishments must ensure the availability of clean drinking water, subject it to regular testing and maintain rigorous checks on all food ingredients.

Pest-control measures are mandated in food storage areas, and the use of Ajinomoto, is prohibited in dishes. As part of this effort, the Food Safety and Quality Assurance Department will now enforce mandatory licensing for all vegetable vendors in the City. *—Salar News*

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

PHOTO: PTI

Oppn suspects conspiracy over Vinesh row

INDIA bloc seeks justice for Vinesh and holds a protest after Parliament walkout

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Wrestler Vinesh Phogat will always be a champion, said politicians across party lines as they came out in support of the grappler after her disqualification from the Paris Olympics, with the government asking the Indian Olympic Association to take "appropriate action" in the matter.

INDIA bloc MPs held a protest on Parliament premises alleging that wrestler Phogat's disqualification from the Olympics reeked of a "conspiracy" and demanded justice for her.

Members of Opposition parties like Congress, TMC, NCP(SP), JMM, RJD and SP also walked out from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Congress however alleged that Phogat was the victim of a "conspiracy" and took a swipe at the government, asking that when Modi can stop the Russia-Ukraine war, then why can't he ensure justice for the Indian grappler.

Opposition MPs walkout & raise slogans in support of wrestler Vinesh in Parl premises on Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

"The entire Opposition... staged a walkout in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha demanding justice for Vinesh Phogat. Modi ji posted a consolation tweet. A consolation tweet will not work Modi ji, justice must be ensured for her," Congress General Secretary Randeep Surjewala said.

"You saw how she (Phogat) was disqualified after being found overweight by a few grams. There is a possibility that there may have been a conspiracy against her. She should get justice," she said. Meanwhile,

Opposition MPs criticised the mention of the amount spent by the government on training of Phogat. Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said a total financial assistance of Rs 70,45,775 was given for the Paris Olympic cycle. However, Congress MP Shafi Parambil expressed strong disapproval of the minister's statement.

"I don't think it was right on the part of the government to quote the amount spent on her practice when the whole world was listening. This is not BJP leaders' personal wealth. It's the money of the people," Parambil said.

TMC demands Bharat Ratna or RS seat for Phogat

TMC demanded Bharat Ratna or a President-nominated Rajya Sabha seat for Phogat, acknowledging the extraordinary mettle she has demonstrated.

TMC also shared a video on social media of Phogat's role in the protest against former Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who was accused of sexual harassment by women wrestlers.

—PTI

BRS's Rama Rao booked for flying drone without nod

HYDERABAD, 7 AUG

A case has been registered against BRS working president KT Rama Rao for allegedly flying a drone "without permission" during his recent visit to Medigadda barrage in Jayashankar Bhupalapally district. A team of BRS leaders led by Rama Rao on 26 July visited the barrage, a part of the Kaleshwaram irrigation project to "expose the Congress government" and explain the facts to people. The ruling Congress and BRS have been engaged in a war of words over the damage to some piers of the Medigadda barrage, part of the project. The National Dam Safety Authority had found in November last year that the Medigadda barrage had been severely compromised, rendering it useless unless fully rehabilitated. Alleging harassment by the government, BRS sources said Chief Minister himself had earlier termed flying drones a trivial issue. *—PTI*

NCP(SP) to launch mass outreach yatra on 9 Aug

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

Ahead of the Maharashtra assembly elections, the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) will launch a mass outreach programme from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's birthplace in Pune on 9 August, a party leader said on Wednesday. State Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) president Jayant Patil will lead the 'Shiv Swarajya Yatra', which will be launched from the Shivneri Fort in Pune's Junnar taluka, The yatra is a fight for Maharashtra's self-respect and to defeat the ruling Mahayuti, which is "helpless before Delhi," Patil claimed addressing a press conference. Notably, the rival NCP led by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar is also set to launch its Jan Samman Yatra from Nashik on Thursday. Elections to the 288-member state assembly are due in October this year. *—PTI*

No alliance for J&K Assembly polls: NC chief Farooq

SRINAGAR, 7 AUG

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday said his party will not enter into a pre-poll alliance with any other party for the Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir. "We will not enter into any alliance, totally not," Abdullah told reporters here. The NC chief's comments came on the eve of the Election Commission's (EC) visit to Jammu and Kashmir to review the preparations for the polls. Led by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, the EC officials will meet the representatives of political parties to get their feedback on conducting the polls. Abdullah said the poll panel will talk to the parties and then consult the Centre, before finalising the election dates. *—PTI*

INDIA bloc MPs' Friday meeting called off

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

A meeting of the INDIA bloc parties scheduled to take place in the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan on Friday has been called off due to the unavailability of some leaders, a source said. The Opposition MPs are likely to stage a protest in the Parliament complex over the price rise issue on Thursday. INDIA bloc, which has 243 MPs in the Lok Sabha against the 293 of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), has been putting up a united front against the government in Parliament. On Tuesday, INDIA bloc MPs staged a protest at the gate of the Parliament building demanding the government to withdraw 18 per cent GST on life and health insurance premiums. They had also staged a protest on the first day of the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha while holding copies of the Constitution. *—PTI*

Finance Bill is 'tax trap bill': Oppn

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Opposition on Wednesday accused the Centre of indulging in "tax terrorism", alleging that the Finance Bill should be renamed as "tax trap bill" and a "reverse Robin Hood" syndrome was prevailing under the Modi government.

Robin Hood was a legendary outlaw in English folklore who stole from the rich and gave to the poor.

Participating in the debate on the Finance Bill, Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee said there is no doubt that the country is the fastest growing economy in the world, but the poor people of India are not getting its benefits.

Participating in the discussion, DMK's Kalanidhi Veerasamy also called the Central government a complete failure on the front of reducing unemployment.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during the Lok Sabha Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Cong questions dropping of Preamble from books

Opposition Congress party on Wednesday raised in Rajya Sabha the issue of dropping of Preamble to the Constitution from certain NCERT textbooks saying this was an attempt to impose communal ideology on the country - a claim which Union Minister JP Nadda countered saying the government was committed to protecting constitution.

Raising the issue, Leader of the Opposition and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said Preamble, which is the soul and foundation of the Indian Constitution, used to be published in NCERT textbooks.

Raghav Chadha of Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday demanded establishment of a corridor to Sri Nankana Sahib in Pakistan's Punjab province to facilitate the visit of Sikh devotees to the sacred birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev.

'Declare Wayanad landslide a national disaster: RaGa

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday called on the government to declare the recent calamity in Kerala's Wayanad a national disaster.

Emphasising the need to declare the Wayanad landslides a national disaster, he said, "I saw it with my own eyes. I visited many different places where the disaster took place. In some cases, an entire family is gone, with just one person remaining, sometimes an adult or a child." *—PTI*

'K'taka, HP got highest flood relief funds'

Centre granted the highest allocation to Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and Assam under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) in the last two years, 2022-2024, the government told the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. The funds were given for relief and rehabilitation of people affected in natural disasters. Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said while Rs 941 crore was approved for Karnataka, Rs 873 crore and Rs 594 crore were for Himachal Pradesh and Assam for floods and landslides in 2022-24. *—PTI*

SEEKS INCLUSIVITY

Wakf Bill to be tabled today, Oppn demands scrutiny

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Opposition parties on Wednesday demanded that the Wakf (Amendment) Bill be sent to Parliament's standing committee for scrutiny after it is introduced, with the government telling the Business Advisory Committee that it will take a call after assessing the sense of Lok Sabha.

Meanwhile, the Bill which seeks to amend the law governing Wakf boards has proposed far-reaching changes in the present Act, including ensuring the representation of Muslim women and non-Muslims in such bodies.

There is a strong possibility that the government may agree to refer the Bill, which is being opposed by some Muslim organisations, to a parliamentary panel. Sources said some parties, which have been supportive of the government's agenda, have also expressed their reservation over the proposed legislation.

PHOTO: PTI

Congress MP Gourav Gogoi and Trinamool Congress MP Sudip Bandyopadhya were among the Opposition members who made the demand to send the Bill to Parliament's standing committee.

The Central Waqf Council and state Waqf Boards must have two women on the board. The Council will now consist of a Union Minister, three MPs, three representatives of Muslim organisations, and three Muslim law experts. *—PTI*

Will you arrest him again: HC asks ED over Kejri's bail

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday questioned the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as to what remained in its challenge seeking cancellation of bail granted to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal when he had already been granted interim bail by the Supreme Court in the excise policy-linked money laundering case.

The High Court said it was only an academic issue now and asked if the ED petition is allowed, will the agency again arrest the chief minister?

"Answer my question. What will happen if I allow your petition? Will you arrest him again?" Justice Neena Bansal Krishna asked ED's counsel.

The counsel said there was no question of arrest and no one has declared his arrest to be illegal.

On 12 July, the Supreme Court granted interim bail to Kejriwal in the money laundering case. At the outset, ED's counsel urged the court to grant an adjournment and

PHOTO: PTI

hear the matter on Thursday as the additional solicitor general who has to argue the case was busy in another court.

Kejri with Bibhav after Maliwal incident: Chargesheet

The Delhi Police said that they were probing the "larger conspiracy" behind the "brutal attack" on Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar.

In the chargesheet, police also said that Kumar and Kejriwal were "together" at the Chief Minister's official residence after the alleged offence was committed. *—PTI*

SC pulls up M'rashtra over no-payment of aid

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the Maharashtra government for not filing its response to the construction of buildings in forest land and compensation to the affected private party.

The apex court also said the Maharashtra government has funds for distributing freebies under 'Ladli Behna' and 'Ladka Bhau' schemes but not for paying money for the loss of land.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai, KV Viswanathan and Sandeep Mehta gave time to the state government till 13 August to file its response saying if the order is not complied with, the chief secretary shall be present in the court.

The top court was hearing a matter related to the construction of buildings in forest land in Maharashtra, where a private party has succeeded in the apex court to get possession of the land which was "illegally occupied" by the state government. *—PTI*

AFTERMATH OF TURMOIL

Indo-Bangla trade resumes partially, to normalise soon

KOLKATA, 7 AUG

Trade between India and Bangladesh, which has halted since 5 August, resumed partially through several land ports in West Bengal on Wednesday, officials said. Trade, mostly of perishable goods, resumed in land ports at Hili, Changrabandha, Mahadipur, Fulbari, and Gojadanga.

Export from Petrapole, South Asia's largest land port in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, is expected to commence on Thursday, officials said.

Sajedur Rahman, general secretary of the Benapole C&F Staff Association, said, "A meeting was held between two land ports and we expect that trade will resume at 6 am tomorrow."

The ouster of Sheikh Hasina as Bangladesh prime minister sent a message across the world that the people are supreme and those in power should not test their patience, former chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said. *—PTI/ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

During Sheikh Hasina's time, all northeast-based insurgent groups were driven out. So it is a concern for us, and we hope Bangladesh does not become a safehouse for northeast insurgents again

-Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM

BJP tears into Khurshid over anarchist remark

BJP on Wednesday slammed as "anarchist" Congress leader Salman Khurshid's remarks that a Bangladesh-like situation could happen in India as well.

At a book release function on Tuesday night, Khurshid said that though "everything may look normal on the surface", what in Bangladesh could happen in India.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, who was also present at the event, said on Wednesday that he could not explain what Khurshid meant but the larger message that Bangladesh has given is about the importance of democracy and elections. *—PTI*

WHAT'S NEW?

Ask MVA partners if I am okay as CM face: Uddhav

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Shiv Sena-UBT supremo Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday dropped hints that he was ready to be projected as the chief ministerial face in the Maharashtra Assembly elections likely to be held in October.

Thackeray's comments came on a day when he met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, AICC general secretary K C Venugopal and other INDIA bloc representatives here.

Thackeray was accompanied by his son Aditya and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut.

Uddhav Thackery with Mallikarjun Kharge ***PHOTO: PTI***

"If my colleagues (in MVA) feel that I have done excellent work, then ask them whether they want me as the chief minister. People will decide," Thackeray told reporters here before meeting the Congress leadership.

Thackeray served as the chief minister of Maharashtra for two-and-a-half years as head of the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress – Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance before his government was pulled down by the BJP after dissent in the Sena ranks.

Thackeray, who steered Maharashtra during the Covid-19 pandemic, said he had never dreamt of becoming the state's chief minister.

"Ask them if they want me as the chief minister," he said to questions of being projected as the chief ministerial face of the MVA alliance. *—PTI*

Kejri writes to LG, says Atishi will hoist flag at I-Day

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Jailed Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has written to the lieutenant governor, saying cabinet minister Atishi will hoist the national flag in his place at the Delhi government's Independence Day function, the AAP said on Wednesday, even as the LG office denied receiving any communication.

BJP hit out at Kejriwal over the issue, pointing out that according to the national flag protocol, only the chief minister can hoist the tricolour and said the AAP supremo should make Atishi chief minister by resigning from the post.

According to the national flag protocol, only the chief minister is allowed to hoist the flag in the states, Sachdeva said. *—PTI*

Centre has responsibility to defend Manipur: CM

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The government of India is responsible for defending Manipur and must take stern action against communal and divisive forces that have wreaked havoc in the state, Inner Manipur MP Angomcha Bimol Akoijam said.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, he said divisive elements as well as "foreign powers" and "illegal immigrants" were disrupting peace efforts in the state that has been facing crisis for 14 months.

"Peace efforts have been made and there was an agreement achieved by two communities in the district of Jiribam, mediated by the security forces," Akoijam said.

He said the government of India has a "historical, political, moral and legal responsibility to defend Manipur as an entity that existed before the commencement of this Constitution. "

PHOTO: PTI

"In the instrument of accession signed by the then maharaja of the state on August 11, 1947, the defence of the state was handed over to the government of India, and therefore the government of India must take stern action against these divisive forces. *—PTI*

Student dies after food poisoning in UP school

DEORIA, 7 AUG

A 15-year-old school boy, who was among the several children hospitalised here two days ago after food poisoning, died in eastern Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur on Wednesday, officials said. Around 80 students from the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Ashram School in Mehroona village had fallen ill with symptoms of stomach pain, vomiting and diarrhoea after eating the school meal, and were hospitalised on Monday. Ashram schools, which provide residential-based free education to meritorious students from financially weaker sections of society, are being run by the Social Welfare Department of the state. "A student receiving treatment has passed away this Wednesday morning. The deceased student, Shivam Yadav, son of Sadanand Yadav, aged 15, was a resident of Bhaisiya Ramnagar, Farenda Tehsil, Maharajganj district," Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Rajesh Jha said. *—PTI*

Bikers damage Ambedkar statue in Aligarh, probe on

ALIGARH, 7 AUG

Two bike riders damaged a statue of Bhim Rao Ambedkar in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. The Uttar Pradesh police have formed three teams to arrest the accused, officials said on Wednesday. The incident occurred in Wajidpur village under Thana Dadon in Aligarh, officials reported. The police arrived at the scene immediately after receiving word of the incident and registered a case against the culprits. Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Ravi Shankar Prasad stated, "Information was received in Wajidpur village under Thana Dadon that some individuals have damaged Baba Saheb's statue. It has been established that two individuals on a bike damaged one finger on the right hand of Baba Saheb's statue. The bike has been recovered, and individuals have been identified. Three teams have been formed to apprehend them." *—ANI*

Ex-RPF cop charged with murder in train firing

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

A Mumbai court on Wednesday charged dismissed Railway Protection Force (RPF) constable Chetansinh Chaudhary, accused of shooting dead four persons on a moving train in Palghar last year, with murder and promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion. Chaudhary, lodged at a jail in Akola, located around 550 kms from here, was produced before the court which framed the charges against him, paving the way for commencement of trial in the case. The incident took place on 31 July last year on board the moving Jaipur-Mumbai Central Express near Palghar railway station in Maharashtra. Chaudhary was nabbed with his weapon later while trying to flee after passengers pulled the chain of the train which stopped near Mira Road station (on the Mumbai suburban network). He had allegedly shot dead RPFAssistant Sub-Inspector Tika Ram Meena and three other passengers on board the train. *—PTI*

Wanted contract killer shot dead in encounter

MATHURA, 7 AUG

A wanted killer, Pankaj Yadav, was shot dead during an encounter with Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) in Mathura on Wednesday, said UP police officials. At around 5.20am, in the Farah police station area of Mathura district, contract killer Yadav with a reward of Rs 1 lakh got injured in the police encounter and was shifted to a hospital, said UP police officials. One pistol, one revolver, one two-wheeler and other incriminating materials were recovered. One accused managed to escape from the spot and is being searched in the nearby police station areas, the statement added further. *—PTI*

SC deletes judge's remarks against court

SC raps HC judge for scandalous remarks

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The bench said such observations bring entire judicial machinery into disrepute affecting dignity of apex court and high courts **PHOTO: PTI**

The Supreme Court on Wednesday expunged some "scandalous" and "unwarranted" observations made against the apex court by a single judge bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court in a contempt case, saying it was "pained" by these remarks.

A five-judge special bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud took suo motu note of the remarks and said these observations of Justice Rajbir Sehrawat of the high court were a "matter of grave concern".

Observing that no court including the High Courts and the Supreme Court is "supreme", the bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, BR Gavai, Surya Kant and Hrishikesh Roy, said such observations were wholly unnecessary for the conduct of the proceedings before the high court and moreover, the Constitution is "supreme".

It, however, did not issue a notice and initiate proceedings against the high court judge for his "scandalous" observations at this stage.

The top court noted it has been apprised that a division bench presided over by the high court's Chief Justice has taken suo motu notice of his observations and stayed his order.

It said parties may be aggrieved by an order but the judges can never be aggrieved by an order of a superior court.

The bench said such observations bring entire judicial machinery into disrepute and affects not only the dignity of the apex court but high courts as well.

It said the principles governing the comity between the high courts and the Supreme Court as the apex judicial institutions have been held in numerous decisions. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

SC DEFERS HEARING ON REVIEW OF 2022 PMLA VERDICT

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Supreme Court on Wednesday deferred to August 28 the hearing on the question whether its 2022 verdict upholding the Enforcement Directorate's powers to arrest and attach property under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act required any reconsideration.

As the hearing commenced, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate (ED), told a three-judge bench headed by Justice Surya Kant that a review has been listed suddenly and he needs some time. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioners, said the 2022 judgment is wrong and it needs reconsideration. *—PTI*

SC directs NGT to oversee impact of silicosis-prone firms

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

- A bench of justices Vikram Nath and Prasanna Bhalachandra Varale said statutory bodies have been constituted and they would be in a better position to monitor and oversee that the mandate of law

The Supreme Court has directed the National Green Tribunal to oversee the impact of silicosis-prone industries and factories across India and ensure that the Central Pollution Control Board and the respective state pollution control boards comply with its earlier directions on the issue.

Silicosis is an incurable occupational lung disease caused by prolonged inhalation of silica dust.

A bench of justices Vikram Nath and Prasanna Bhalachandra Varale said statutory bodies have been constituted and they would be in a better position to monitor and oversee that the mandate of law.

It also direct the NGT to undertake any additional necessary steps to prevent the spread of silicosis by such industries and factories.

"The second aspect concerns ensuring that adequate compensation is received by the affected workers or their next of kins as swiftly as possible. In this regard, we direct the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to oversee the compensation process across the respective states, the bench said.

The top court directed its registry to ensure that all relevant reports and affidavits pertaining to this matter are forwarded to the NGT and the NHRC to facilitate the execution of their responsibilities effectively and swiftly.

The directions of the apex court came while disposing a 2006 plea filed by NGO People's Rights and Social Research Centre seeking intervention of the SC in addressing the grave issue of silicosis among workers in various industries across the country. *—PTI*

'AGAINST I'NTL LAW'

X resists dropping posts against Rajat

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Rajat Sharma **PHOTO: PTI**

Social media giant 'X' Corp has told the Delhi High Court that a direction to remove from all countries posts considered defamatory by journalist Rajat Sharma would be contrary to international law and principles of comity of nations and encroach upon the sovereignty of all other countries.

In an affidavit filed in the High Court in response to a contempt application moved by Sharma, X said the argument that a court can decide what information people in all other countries can see would mean that foreign courts like the courts of Pakistan and China could dictate what the citizens of India can or cannot access on the Internet, based on the laws of Pakistan or China.

Initially, Sharma filed a defamation suit and sought removal of alleged offensive posts and videos against him on social media and to restrain Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh, Pawan Khera and Ragini Nayak from making allegations against him, whom he claimed had defamed him druring his show on Lok Sabha polls result day. *—PTI*

KERALA MANDATES MIN MARKS FOR STUDENTS

T'PURAM, 7 AUG

School students in Kerala now need to obtain a certain minimum score of marks to clear each subject to be promoted to the next higher class, as the government on Wednesday decided to implement a "subject minimum" system in examinations in various classes.

A cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan gave a nod to implementing the new system in schools that follow the state syllabus -- as part of efforts to improve academic standards.

The Vijayan government has come up with the minimum mark system amid criticism of the quality of school education in state schools and against the system of promoting all students on to the higher classes. The subject minimum would be implemented in Class 8 in the academic year 2024-25, in Class 8 and 9 during 2025-26, and in the Class 8, 9, and 10 during the academic year 2026-27, a CMO statement said. *—PTI*

An Indian Air Force helicopter, in joint efforts with the Indian Army, during the seventh day of the rescue operation following landslides that led to massive damage in Wayanad district **PHOTO: PTI**

138 people missing in Wayanad landslides: Draft list

WAYANAD, 7 AUG

As many as 138 people are missing following the massive landslides that hit this north Kerala district more than a week ago, according to the initial figures released by the local administration on Wednesday.

The draft list of 138 missing people was prepared based on ration cards and voter records of the disaster-hit areas, the district administration said in a release.

"The list of missing people was prepared after collating the official records held by Gram Panchayat, ICDS, District Education Office, Labor Office, District Disaster Management Authority etc.," it said.

The district administration said that it was the first draft and the public can check it and inform the authorities if they have information about those missing.

Meanwhile, in a heartening display of social responsibility, a Kochi-based user-interface software development company, has lent its expertise to streamline relief efforts for landslide survivors in Wayanad in Kerala.

Rajith Ramachandran, co-founder of Faircode Infotech, and his team have volunteered their services to create a robust inventory management system at the relief material collection centre set up at St Joseph's Higher Secondary School. *—PTI*

Kerala boy pens letter to Army, wins hearts on social media

A letter penned by a school student lavishing praise on soldiers involved in rescue operations in landslide-hit Wayanad has won the heart of the Indian Army, which gave him a touching reply through its social handle. Rayan, a Class 3 student wrote down the letter in his school diary, saying that he felt "proud and happy" to see the Army men rescuing people who were stuck under debris. *—PTI*

Search for 30 missing in HP floods enters 7th day

SHIMLA, 7 AUG

Family members of the around 30 people who went missing following flash floods triggered by a cloudburst here on 31 July have begun losing hope as the search and rescue operations to trace the victims entered the seventh day on Wednesday amid incessant rains.

Sharing details about the ongoing operation in Samej village here, Assistant Commanding Officer, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) Karam Singh, said, "It is raining but the joint search and rescue operations are underway."

"The water level is rising in Sutlej River and slides are also occurring at multiple places. JCBs and other machines are being used to clear the roads. Our soldiers are skilled and cross the river through ropes to search the sites where there is any possibility of finding the missing people", Singh added.

Samej falls under Sarpara Panchayat in Rampur subdivision of Shimla district and borders the Kullu district.

The family members of the missing persons who have been camping at the site for the past seven days have now lost hope and are praying for the recovery of bodies to perform last rites. *—PTI*

MP HC overturns Wakf Board's claim on monuments

JABALPUR, 7 AUG

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has set aside an order of the MP Wakf Board claiming ownership of some of the prominent historical monuments in Burhanpur district, including the tombs of Shah Shuja and Nadir Shah.

The MP Wakf Board in an order on 19 July, 2013 declared the Tomb of Shah Shuja, Tomb of Nadir Shah, Bibi Sahib's Masjid and a palace situated in the fort of Burhanpur as its property. The Archaeological Survey of India had challenged it on ground that the it they were properties of the central government. On 26 July, a single bench of Justice GS Ahluwalia said, "The property in question is an ancient and protected monument duly notified under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 and therefore, CEO, MP Waqf Board committed a material illegality by directing the petitioner to vacate the same." *—PTI*

FIR quashed against ex-actor Kulkarni

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

The Bombay High Court has quashed a 2016 drugs case registered against former Bollywood actor Mamta Kulkarni, noting that the proceedings against her were manifestly frivolous.

Kulkarni had filed a petition for quashing of the FIR lodged against her in 2016 by the Thane police under various provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. *—PTI*

CBI takes over probe into Delhi coaching deaths

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Puja Khedkar **PHOTO: PTI**

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) thas taken over the probe into the deaths of three civil services aspirants at a coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar here and registered an FIR against the owner of the institute, officials said on Wednesday.

The central agency has re-registered a case against Abhishek Gupta, owner of Rau's IAS Study Circle, in accordance with the laid down procedure, the officials said.

The CBI has booked Gupta for culpable homicide not amounting to murder, causing death by negligence, voluntarily causing hurt, negligent conduct, and common intention.

The High Court had castigated police and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) over the students' deaths, saying it was unable to fathom how they could not come out of the basement. It also sought to know whether the doors were blocked or staircases narrow.

"What's your line of looking? How did the children drown? You have done an investigation now. We are on August 2. Why were they not able to come out of the basement? It doesn't get flooded immediately. Water takes at least two-three minutes to fill a basement, it can't happen in a minute. Why were they not able to come out," the court had asked. *—PTI*

FAKE JOBS

14 Indians saved from Laos cyber scam centres

VIENTIANE, 7 AUG

So far, 548 Indian youth have been rescued, according to the Indian Embassy in Laos **PHOTO: X / @INDIANEMBLAOS**

The Indian Embassy in Laos rescued 14 Indian youth from cyber-scam centers in the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone (SEZ). It further said that officials are working tirelessly with Laos authorities to ensure their safe return back to India.

So far, 548 Indian youth have been rescued, according to the Indian Embassy in Laos.

In a post on X, the Indian Embassy in Laos stated, "Embassy rescues 14 more Indian youth from cyber-scam centres in Golden Triangle SEZ. Our officials work tirelessly and closely with Lao authorities to ensure their safe return back to India. 548 Indian youth rescued so far. Important Advisory for Indian youth in thread below."

https://x.com/IndianEmbLaos/status/1821038261672059112

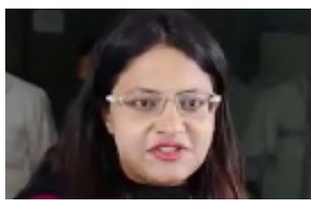
It also issued an advisory for Indian nationals regarding job offers in Laos. It asked Indian nationals not to put themselves at risk regarding any job offers which may be luring and forcing them into committing cyber scams.

The Indian Embassy in Laos said, "Instances have come to our notice recently wherein Indian nationals are being lured for employment through Thailand in Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) also known as Laos." The Indian Embassy in Laos said that victims are illegally taken across the border into Laos from Thailand and held captive to work in Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone in Laos under "harsh and restrictive conditions."

Earlier in July, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar called on Laos Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone. During the meeting, Jaishankar had taken up the issue of the trafficking of Indian nationals through cyber scam centers. *—ANI*

HC: Khedkar can challenge cancellation of candidature

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG



Puja Khedkar **PHOTO: PTI**

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday granted liberty to former probationary IAS Puja Khedkar to approach the appropriate forum to challenge the cancellation of her candidature.

Meanwhile, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has informed the Court that it will provide Puja Khedkar with the order cancelling her candidature within two days. The bench of Justice Jyoti Singh disposed of Puja Khedkar's plea and clarified that it has not examined or expressed any opinion on the merits of the case.

The court also added that the filing of the petition will not affect the adjudication of the issue by the appropriate forum. Naresh Kaushik, representing the UPSC, explained that the press release was issued because Khedkar's whereabouts were unknown.

On 31 July, the UPSC stated that it had taken a decision to cancel the provisional candidature of Khedkar, who was facing accusations of cheating and forgery. The UPSC found Khedkar violating rules and debarred her from all future exams and selections. *—ANI*

NO ROAD, NO RIVER

In a bizarre turn of events, Bihar's Rural Works Department has built a bridge in Paramanpur Panchayat, Rani Ganj block, that neither connects to any roads nor spans a river. Located on a private land in Ward No. 6, the bridge has puzzled the people questioning its purpose
PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Shock, anger following Phogat's disqualification

PARIS OLYMPICS 2024

Vinesh Phogat was disqualified after being found overweight ahead of her women's 50kg final here, leaving her medal-less within hours of coming close to an unparalleled gold ***PHOTO: PTI***

India was in a state of disbelief after Vinesh Phogat's shocking disqualification ahead of her 50kg wrestling final as people from all walks of life expressed their disappointment and frustration at the huge setback, calling it "cruel" and "biggest heartbreak" of the Paris Olympics.

Phogat was disqualified after being found overweight ahead of her women's 50kg final here, leaving her medal-less within hours of coming close to an unparalleled gold.

The news sparked widespread anger as fans flooded the social media with messages supporting the athlete and many also questioned the "dictatorial system".

"This is a cruel end to Vinesh Phogat's Olympic journey. She was unstoppable..," wrote a fan, while another added: "biggest heartbreak of 2024 Olympics for India. Vinesh Phogat was thrown out of the Olympics due to being 100 grams overweight. The Indian lioness moving towards gold will not get any medal now. Heartbreak."

Another user wrote: "This is terrible and cruel. You prepare for this day for the whole life and you got disqualified because you were few grams more than 50 kg. This is sad beyond words."

According to International rules, if any grappler is found overweight at the time of weigh-in then he or she will end up at the bottom of the final standings.

Celebrities also expressed their anguish at the terrible news.

From sportspeople to Bollywood stars, all expressed their support for Phogat. "I think it's (the) most unfortunate. I also think it's most unfair. I do hope that the authorities will take notice of it, take a strong response to this because this is not just the initial round," legendary cricketer Sunil Gavaskar said at an event in Mumbai.

"We're talking about the world medal round and therefore this cannot and should not be taken lying down by anybody in India — whether it's the Indian Olympic Association or the government of India. I think we actually must be protesting very very strongly about this whole thing."

Rio Olympic bronze medallist wrestler Sakshi Malik called it "devastating".

"My heart is nervous and troubled, what Vinesh has done is beyond imagination.

This is perhaps the most devastating incident to happen to an Indian athlete in this Olympics. We can't even imagine what she might be going through. If it was possible, I would have given my medal to Vinesh," Malik wrote.

AAP MP Sanjay Singh called for a boycott of the Olympics.

"This is not an insult to Vinesh but to the country, @Phogat_Vinesh was going to create history in the whole world, declaring her 100 grams overweight and disqualifying her is a grave injustice. The whole country stands with Vinesh, the Indian government should intervene immediately, if the matter is not accepted then boycott the Olympics," he tweeted.

Bollywood stars Farhan Akhtar and Taapsee Pannu also expressed their solidarity with Phogat.

"Dear @vineshphogat .. One can only try and imagine how devastated you must be but still not fully understand. Heartbroken for you that the quest ended like this," Akhtar wrote on X.

"But please know that we are all very proud of you and all you have done for the sport. You will always be a champion and an inspiration to millions.

Keep your chin up."

Taapsee, who is married to former Indian men's doubles badminton coach Mathias Boe, wrote: "This is heartbreaking but honestly this woman has already made her mark beyond gold by now."

There were other users who expressed their support for Phogat.

"Whether you come home with a medal or not, we are immensely proud of you. As an Indian, I can say that you have already won in our hearts. A mere 100 grams can never diminish our respect for you," one comment read.

Another user wrote: "Some Achievements are worth More than the Medal. You've Fought, You've Won, You've Conquered!! Proud Of You for bravely choosing to stand for what is Right!"

The 29-year-old had taken down defending champion Yui Susaki of Japan en route the finals on Tuesday in a remarkable performance and was to face American Sarah Ann Hildebrandt in the summit bout this evening. Taapsee, who is married to former Indian men's doubles badminton coach Mathias Boe, wrote: "This is heartbreaking but honestly this woman has already made her mark beyond gold by now."

There were other users who expressed their support for Phogat. "Whether you come home with a medal or not, we are immensely proud of you. As an Indian, I can say that you have already won in our hearts. A mere 100 grams can never diminish our respect for you," one comment read.

—PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساہر

WHO lists pathogens that could spark next pandemic

The number of pathogens that could trigger the next pandemic has grown to more than 30, and now includes influenza A virus, dengue virus and monkeypox virus, according to an updated list published by the World Health Organization (WHO) this week. Researchers say that the list of 'priority pathogens' will help organizations to decide where to focus their efforts in developing treatments, vaccines and diagnostics.

"It's very comprehensive," says Neelika Malavige, an immunologist at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in Colombo, Sri Lanka, who was involved in the effort. She studies the Flaviviridae family of viruses, which includes the virus that causes dengue fever.

The priority pathogens, published in a report on 30 July, were selected for their potential to cause a global public-health emergency in people, such as a pandemic. This was on the basis of evidence showing that the pathogens were highly transmissible and virulent, and that there was limited access to vaccines and treatments. The WHO's two previous efforts, in 2017 and 2018, identified roughly a dozen priority pathogens.

"The prioritization process helps identify critical knowledge gaps that need to be addressed urgently," and ensure the efficient use of resources, says Ana Maria Henao Restrepo, who leads the WHO's R&D Blueprint for Epidemics team that prepared the report.

It's important to regularly revisit these lists to account for major global changes in climate change deforestation, urbanization, international travel and more, says Malavige.

The latest effort identified risky pathogens in entire families of viruses and bacteria, which broadened its scope.

Mpox and smallpox

More than 200 scientists spent some two years evaluating evidence on 1,652 pathogen species — mostly viruses, and some bacteria — to decide which ones to include on the list.

Among the more than 30 priority pathogens are the group of coronaviruses known as Sarbecovirus, which includes SARS-CoV-2 — the virus that caused the global Covid-19 pandemic — and Merbecovirus, which includes the virus that causes Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). Previous lists included the specific viruses that cause severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and MERS, but not the entire subgenuses that they belong to.

Other additions to the list include the monkeypox virus, which caused a global mpox outbreak in 2022, and continues to spread in pockets of Central Africa. The virus is deemed a priority, and so is it's relative, the variola virus, which causes smallpox, despite it having been eradicated in 1980. This is because, owing to people no longer getting vaccinated routinely against the virus, and therefore not becoming immune to it, an unplanned release of it could cause a pandemic. The virus could potentially be used "by terrorists as a biological weapon", says Malavige.

Half a dozen influenza A viruses are also now on the list, including subtype H5, which has sparked an outbreak in cattle in the United States. Among the five bacteria — all newly added — are strains that cause cholera, plague, dysentery, diarrhea and pneumonia.

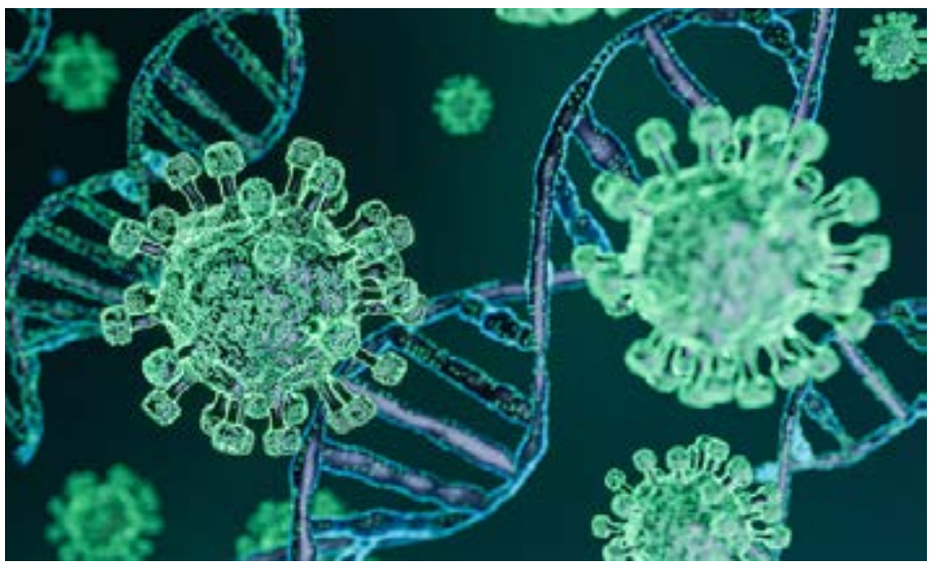
Two rodent viruses have also been added because they have jumped to people, with sporadic human-to-human transmission. Climate change and increased urbanization could raise the risk of these viruses transmitting to people, according to the report. The bat-borne Nipah virus remains on the list because it is deadly and highly transmissible in animals, and there are currently no therapies to protect against it.

Many of the priority pathogens are currently confined to specific regions but have the potential to spread globally, says says Naomi Forrester-Soto, a virologist at the Pirbright Institute near Woking, UK, who also contributed to the analysis. She studies the Togaviridae family, which includes the virus that causes Chikungunya. "There isn't really any one place that is most at risk," she says.

'Prototype' pathogens

In addition to the list of priority pathogens, researchers also created a separate list of 'prototype pathogens', which could act as model species for basic-science studies and the development of therapies and vaccines. "This may encourage more research," into less-studied viruses and bacteria, says Forrester-Soto. For example, before the Covid-19 pandemic, there were no available human vaccines for any of the coronaviruses, says Malik Peiris, a virologist at the University of Hong Kong, who was part of the Coronaviridae research group. Developing vaccines for one member of the family will bring confidence to the scientific community that it is better placed to address a major public-health emergency for those viruses, he says. This applies to treatments, too, he says, because "many antivirals work across a whole group of viruses."

Courtesy, Nature



The new WHO list includes influenza A virus, dengue virus and monkeypox virus, which caused a global mpox outbreak in 2022, and continues to spread in pockets of Central Africa ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

The Nobel winner Yunus tasked with leading B'desh out of chaos

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus has been chosen to lead Bangladesh's interim government after the country's former prime minister Sheik Hasina resigned and fled the country following weeks of violent unrest.

A well-known critic of Hasina, Yunus called the day of Hasina's departure Bangladesh's "second liberation day".

Banker to the poor

One of nine children, Yunus was born to a family of Muslim merchants in the coastal Bangladeshi city of Chittagong. At 25 he travelled to the United States to study under a Fulbright scholarship, and returned to Bangladesh in 1971 – the same year the country won its independence from Pakistan in a brutal, bloody war.

Upon his return, Yunus was elected to head Chittagong University's economics department, and soon became passionately involved with combatting the famine that ravaged Bangladesh in the mid-70s.

"I became involved in the poverty issue not as a policy-maker or a researcher," he said in a 2005 lecture at the Commonwealth Institute in London. "I became involved because poverty was all around me.

"I could not turn my eyes away from it... I wanted to do something immediate to help people around me."

It was in this way that Yunus became a pioneer of a concept known as "microcredit": when people who are too impoverished to borrow from a traditional bank are given extremely small loans, often allowing them to become self-employed.

In 1983 Yunus founded Grameen Bank, the self-proclaimed "pioneer microcredit organisation in the world", which has since accumulated more than nine million clients.

In a 2002 interview with the BBC, he described microcredit as a "need of the people".

"Whatever name you give it, you have to have those financial facilities coming to them because it is totally unfair... to deny half the population of the world financial services," he said.

Yunus's scheme was so successful that even beggars had been able to borrow money under his scheme.

Both Yunus and Grameen Bank were awarded the Peace Prize in 2006 for their work to "create economic and social development from below", according to the Nobel Prize website. Some however criticised the concept, saying they charge exorbitant interest rates and use coercive debt collection methods.

Protesters celebrate after Sheikh Hasina's resignation, in Dhaka; Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus who has been chosen to lead Bangladesh's interim government was sentenced to six months in prison for violations of labour law in January this year ***PHOTOS: PTI***

Accusations and smear campaigns

Yunus himself has weathered a storm of hostility and controversy in Bangladesh though, including from Hasina, the leader he is now set to replace.

He attracted the ire of the former prime minister after announcing plans in 2007 to set up his own "Citizen Power" party.

Hasina notoriously accused Yunus of "sucking blood from the poor", and in 2011 her government removed him as head of Grameen Bank. In 2013, he faced a state-backed smear campaign that accused him of being un-Islamic and promoting homosexuality, after he signed a joint statement criticising the prosecution of gay people in Uganda.

Yunus has also faced charges based on allegations that he received money without government permission, and more recent allegations that he embezzled money from one of his company's workers' benefits fund.

In January of this year he was sentenced to six months in prison for violations of labour law, which he denied, and in June he and 13 others were indicted on embezzlement charges.

Although he since been granted bail, he now faces more than 100 cases regarding labour violations and graft accusations. Yunus has denied all charges, claiming that attacks against him are politically motivated.

Such controversies have done little to Yunus's appeal with many of his supporters, though, who claim he is being targeted as a result of his acrimonious relations with Hasina. Asif Mahmud, a key leader of the Students Against Discrimination (SAD) group, posted a striking image to Facebook on Tuesday: a red tile with white text – the same format Mahmud has used for dozens of statements relating to the protests and their aftermath.

This one had just five words: "In Dr Yunus, we trust."

—BBC News

PHOTO: AP

Pak man arrested for plot to kill Donald Trump

WASHINGTON, 7 AUG

The United States has charged a Pakistani man, who it alleges has ties to Iran, with plotting to carry out political assassinations. Asif Merchant travelled to New York in June seeking to hire a hitman to kill a politician or a US government official in revenge for the 2020 assassination of a senior Iranian military commander, according to a statement issued by the US Justice Department on Wednesday. Merchant, who prosecutors allege spent time in Iran before travelling to the US from Pakistan, was charged with murder for hire in federal court in New York's Brooklyn borough. He was arrested in July as he prepared to leave the US, after having told the potential hitman that he would provide further instructions, including the names of the intended targets, in August or September after he returned to Pakistan. *—Al Jazeera*

Taiwan detects 36 Chinese military aircraft, 8 vessels

TAIPEI, 7 AUG

The Taiwan Ministry of National Defence (MND) has said that 36 Chinese military aircraft and eight naval vessels were detected operating around Taiwan in the last 24 hours until 6 am (local time) on Wednesday. Of the 36 People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft, 31 aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's northern, central, southwestern, and eastern Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ), according to Taiwan's MND. In response to the Chinese military action, Taiwan sent aircraft, and naval ships and deployed coastal-based missile systems to monitor Chinese PLA activity. *—ANI*

Rajapaksas officially ditch Wickremesinghe

COLOMBO, 7 AUG

Namal Rajapaksa, the 38-year-old heir to the Rajapaksa dynasty, was on Wednesday named as the SLPP candidate for the presidential election, thus officially ending Rajapaksa family's backing to the incumbent Ranil Wickremesinghe. Sagara Kariyawasam, the general secretary of the Sri Lanka People's Front (SLPP, also known locally by its popular Sinhalese name, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna), announced the younger Rajapaksa's candidacy early on Wednesday morning at a ceremony at the party headquarters. Namal's entry has made the election a four-cornered contest. Besides, President Wickremesinghe, the main opposition leader Sajith Premadasa and the Marxist JVP leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake are already in the fray. *—PTI*

Khaleda condemns violence, vandalism

Bangladesh interim government led by nobel winner Muhammed Yunis to take oath today

DHAKA, 7 AUG

Bangladesh Nationalist Party leaders said that Khaleda Zia has been concerned about the nationwide violence, vandalism, and looting of state resources amid the anti-discrimination student protest, Dhaka Tribune reported.

Also, the interim government in Bangladesh led by Nobel-laureate Muhammad Yunus will take oath on Thursday, the nation's army chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman said. General Waker told reporters the interim government is likely to take oath at 8 pm. During a meeting with Maulana Mamunul Haque, secretary general of Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis, at Evercare Hospital in Dhaka, she said, "Our state's resources are being wasted. This country is ours; we have to build this country."

On 6 August, Bangladesh President Shahabuddin Ahmed announced the release of former Bangladesh prime minister Khaleda Zia by commuting her jail sentence in line with Article 49 of the Constitution.

After exchanging greetings, she recalled her good relationship with Maulana Mamunul Haque's father late Shaikhul Hadis Azizul Haque, Dhaka Tribune reported.

Zia stated that causing harm to people's lives and property constitutes a serious incident. Many people are involved in the looting of state resources, which is unjust, Dhaka Tribune reported, citing meeting sources. She said that many people are involved in the looting of state resources and termed it unjust. Zia, who was released from jail after the ouster of her arch-rival Sheikh Hasina, has received a renewed passport. *—ANI*

Supporters of Bangladesh Nationalist Party gather to attend a mass party rally as the picture of imprisoned Bangladeshi main Opposition leader Khaleda Zia is displayed on a building, in Dhaka, Bangladesh *PHOTO: PTI*

SEVERAL INMATES ESCAPE KUSHTIA JAIL

DHAKA, 7 AUG

Kushtia District Commissioner Ehtasham Reza told The Daily Star that several inmates have escaped. The army has taken control of the prison now. Several were seen escaping on motorcycles via PTI Road, with their faces covered with towels. Later, army personnel arrived at the scene, fired blank shots, and dispersed the curious crowd. Bangladesh's political crisis has further undermined sovereign credit support since S&P Global Ratings lowered its long-term sovereign credit rating on 30 July this year. The damage to credit metrics may be contained if the socio-political situation normalises soon and Bangladesh (B+/Stable/B) forms a new government, the S&P. *—Courtesy, The Dailystar*

Muslim community protects temples, churches

DHAKA, 7 AUG

Student leaders in Bangladesh have asked supporters to guard Hindu temples and churches as diplomats and rights groups expressed concerns over reports of attacks on minority groups after the prime minister resigned amid a national uprising. There was euphoria – but also looting and the ransacking of national monuments and government buildings – after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country on Monday following weeks of deadly demonstrations against her government.

Opposition politicians on Tuesday called for the protection of all Bangladeshis "irrespective of religion and politics, from discriminatory violence", amid reports of assaults on temples and churches.

Students were seen guarding Hindu temples and other places of worship in social media footage. *—Al Jazeera*

Muslims guarding Hindu temples *PHOTO: X*

B'deshis stranded in Kolkata, worried about violence

KOLKATA, 7 AUG

Several Bangladeshis, who have come here either for medical treatment or education or other purposes, are now stranded in the city and concerned about the ongoing violence and abrupt change of regime in their country.

The suspension of train services between India and Bangladesh has compounded their anxiety, and they are uncertain about their next steps. Imran Ali Manik, a student at a private university in the city, echoed Mostaque.

The disruption in communication channels has resulted in distress as they are unable to check whether their loved ones back home are safe or not.

Pakistan also expressed solidarity with the people of Bangladesh and hoped that the country would soon return to normalcy.

A student-led protest movement over quotas in government jobs in Bangladesh forced Sheikh Hasina to resign as prime minister. *—PTI*

HAMAS WAR

Turkey to join genocide case against Israel in UN court

ANKARA, 7 AUG

Turkey will file a request with a United Nations court on Wednesday to join South Africa's genocide lawsuit against Israel, a Turkish official said.

The declaration of intervention will be submitted at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the official said on condition of anonymity in accordance with regulations.

Turkey, one of the fiercest critics of Israel's actions in Gaza, will become the latest nation to seek to participate in the case. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has frequently compared Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Adolf Hitler, accused his country of genocide, called for it to be punished in international courts.

The declaration of intervention will be submitted at the International Court of Justice in The Hague *PHOTO: AP*

In May, Turkey suspended trade with Israel. In contrast to Western nations that have designated Hamas as a terrorist organisation, Erdogan has commended the group, calling it a liberation movement. South Africa brought a case to the International Court of Justice late last year, accusing Israel of violating the genocide convention through its military operations in Gaza. *—AP*

Hamas chooses Yahya Sinwar as new leader

JERUSALEM, 7 AUG

The Palestinian militant group Hamas chose Yahya Sinwar, its top official in Gaza who masterminded the October 7 attacks in Israel, as its new leader. The group's political leader Ismail Haniyeh was killed July 31 in Iran by a presumed Israeli strike.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken responded to the decision by saying Sinwar has the power to ensure that a cease-fire deal is reached for the Israel-Hamas war.

US President Joe Biden spoke with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Tuesday about their hopes of a cease-fire and hostage release deal calming tensions in the Middle East, which soared after the Iran-backed Lebanese militant group Hezbollah confirmed that Israel killed a top commander after a rare strike in Beirut, as well as Haniyeh's killing. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his Cabinet over the weekend that Israel is already in a "multi-front war" with Iran and its proxies. Inside Gaza, the only corridor for humanitarian aid to enter the south has been shut down because of fighting in the area. Israel issues new evacuation orders. *—AP*

Yahya Sinwar *PHOTO: AP*

Thousands of UK police ready amid fears of more riots

LONDON, 7 AUG

Devon and Cornwall Police have charged six people with violent disorder after protests on Monday night.

Clashes in the city centre left two police officers injured and two members of the public in hospital. The six people charged are four adults and two 17-year-old boys and they're due to appear at Plymouth Magistrates' Court later today.

Asked specifically about suggestions that up to 30 locations were expected to be targets for far-right demonstrations and violence this evening, a government minister has said they need to be "prepared for the eventuality that there may be further unrest and violence."

Police Scotland has issued a statement addressing rumours of a far-right gathering in George Square today after online speculation led to some local businesses advising staff to stay at home.

Posting on social media, Police Scotland Greater Glasgow wrote: "We are aware of speculation circulating about a protest in George Square, Glasgow, today. There is no intelligence to suggest any protest is planned. Please be wary of what you read on social media, and avoid speculation and sharing information which may be inaccurate." *—BBC News/ The Guardian*

Thai court dissolves progressive Move Forward Party

BANGKOK, 7 AUG

A court in Thailand on Wednesday ordered the dissolution of the progressive Move Forward Party, which won national elections in 2023, saying it violated the constitution by proposing an amendment of a law against defaming the country's royal family.

The Constitutional Court said it voted unanimously to dissolve the party because its campaign to amend the law was considered an attempt to overthrow the nation's constitutional monarchy.

The Election Commission filed a petition against the Move Forward Party after the Constitutional Court ruled in January that it must stop advocating changes to the law, known as Article 112, which protects the monarchy from criticism with penalties of up to 15 years in jail per offense.

The ruling also imposed a 10-year ban on political activity on those who held the party's executive positions while it campaigned for the proposed amendment. Among them are its charismatic former leader, Pita Limjaroenrat, and current chief Chaithawat Tulathon.

It remained unclear what will happen to the rest of its non-executive lawmakers, although Pita said in an interview with The Associated Press that the party will ensure they have a "smooth transition into a new house," or a new party.

Lawmakers of a dissolved political party can keep their seats in Parliament if they move to a new party within 60 days. *—AP*

Rescuers work at the site of a helicopter that crashed in Suryachaur area, which is just northwest of Kathmandu, Nepal on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Five killed in Nepal helicopter crash

KATHMANDU, 7 AUG

Four Chinese tourists were among five people killed in Nepal on Wednesday when a helicopter crashed in the mountains northwest region of Kathmandu.

Police have recovered five dead bodies from the crash site in Ward No 7 of Shivapuri Rural Municipality, Nuwakot, Myrepublica newspaper reported.

Nepal-based Air Dynasty helicopter, 9N-AJD, was en route to Rasuwa from Kathmandu when it crashed.

The helicopter departed from Kathmandu at 1:54 PM and was en route to Syaphrubensi when it crashed. According to the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN), a Prabhu helicopter (9N-ANL) was dispatched to the crash site immediately after the incident.

There were five individuals on board, including four Chinese tourists, the paper said. The helicopter lost contact with the tower just three minutes after takeoff from Tribhuvan International Airport, according to the CAAN.

Citing a police official, the paper said that the bodies of two men, one woman and the pilot, identified as Arun Malla, were recovered from the crash site. One body has not been identified yet as it is charred beyond recognition, Myrepublica reported. *—PTI*

DELAYS NEXT CREW LAUNCH

NASA buys more time for Sunita, Butch who are stuck in space for 56 days

WASHINGTON, 7 AUG

NASA is delaying its next astronaut launch to buy more time at the International Space Station for Boeing's troubled new crew capsule.

Tuesday marked the two-month point at the space station for Starliner's test pilots, Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams, who should have been back by mid-June. NASA is weighing all its options for returning the two veteran astronauts, including a ride home in a SpaceX capsule. The agency will share the latest update at 10:00 pm IST on Wednesday and reveal the developments regarding astronaut Sunita Williams aand Commander Butch Willmore's return from space.

The space agency said Tuesday it's bumping SpaceX's four-person flight from this month to next. It's now targeted for 24 September at the earliest. Officials said that will give them more time to analyze thruster and leak problems that hit Boeing's Starliner capsule after its June liftoff, its first with a crew on board.

"NASA and Boeing continue to evaluate the spacecraft's readiness, and no decisions have been made regarding Starliner's return," NASA said in a statement. Further details were expected at a news conference set for Wednesday.

Only two docking ports at the space station can accommodate US astronaut capsules and, right now, both are occupied. So one will need to be vacated before the next SpaceX crew can arrive. Russia has its own parking places for its Soyuz capsules.

The latest setback means the four astronauts who flew up with SpaceX in March now also face a longer mission than planned. Over the past several weeks, Boeing has conducted thruster test firings on the ground as well as in space to better understand why five thrusters failed ahead of Starliner's June 6 arrival at the space station. All but one came back online. Helium leaks in the capsule's propulsion system also cropped up.

Boeing and SpaceX topped NASA's list for astronaut taxi service to and from the space station, after the shuttles retired in 2011. NASA signed contracts worth billions with both companies in order to have a backup in case one of them got sidelined by an accident. *—AP*

Starliner spacecraft docked to the Harmony module of the International Space Station *PHOTO: NASA*

Gold plunges ₹350; silver rises ₹200

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

Gold prices plunged by Rs 350 to Rs 71,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid a fall in the precious metal in the overseas markets. In the previous session, gold of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 71,700 per 10 grams on Tuesday. However, silver prices bounced back after four straight days of massive decline. Silver rose by Rs 200 to Rs 82,200 per kilogram from Rs 82,000 per kg in the previous trade, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also declined by Rs 350 to Rs 71,000 per 10 grams. It had settled at Rs 71,350 per 10 grams in the previous close. On the global front, gold at Comex was quoted at USD 2,393 per ounce, down by USD 16 from the previous close. Silver was marginally down at USD 26.90 per ounce. —*PTI*

Rupee settles 4P lower at 83.96 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 4 paise at 83.96 (provisional) against US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by a recovery in the US dollar and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. Forex traders said the Indian rupee depreciated on Wednesday on a strong US dollar and positive crude oil prices. However, strength in the domestic markets cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.86 and touched an intraday low of 83.97 against the dollar during the session. It finally settled at 83.96 (provisional) against the American currency, down 4 paise from its previous close. The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar on Monday. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength, gained 0.31 per cent to 103.28 points. —*PTI*

L&T, Altair start digital twin centre of excellence

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

L&T Technology Services (LTTS) and global technology firm Altair have established a digital twin centre of excellence (CoE) to spur global innovation and digital transformation. The CoE will deliver digital twin capabilities to joint customers worldwide across mobility, hi-tech, and sustainability segments, both the companies said in a joint statement. "By leveraging LTTS' unparalleled cross-domain engineering expertise and Altair's exceptional simulation and data analysis capabilities, we are set to redefine industry standards across segments such as mobility, sustainability and hi-tech," said Abhishek Sinha, executive director and president of Medical, Smart World, and Functions, LTTS. The centre will assist organisations in learning the latest methodologies and technologies in AI-powered engineering, predictive maintenance, and rapid product development. —*PTI*

Blue Star Q1 net profit up two fold to Rs 168.76 cr

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Air condition and commercial refrigeration system maker Blue Star Ltd has reported a two-fold increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 168.76 crore in the first quarter ended June 2024, helped by a robust demand of cooling products and cost management efforts. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 83.37 crore in the April-June quarter of the previous fiscal, Blue Star said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations was up 28.72 per cent to Rs 2,865.37 crore in the June quarter. It was at Rs 2,222.60 crore in the year-ago period. Blue Star's total expenses increased 25.51 per cent to Rs 2,663.20 crore in the June quarter. Its total income in the June quarter was at Rs 2,889.14 crore, up 29.24 per cent. —*PTI*

NSE Nifty jumped 304.95 points or 1.27 per cent to 24,297.50 **PHOTO: PTI**

Market snaps 3-day slump on value buying

Sensex rallies 874.94 pts to settle at 79,468.01

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty bounced back sharply on Wednesday after three straight days of massive decline following a rally in global peers and value-buying at lower levels.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 874.94 points or 1.11 per cent to settle at 79,468.01. During the day, it jumped 1,046.13 points or 1.33 per cent to 79,639.20.

The NSE Nifty jumped 304.95 points or 1.27 per cent to 24,297.50. Intra-day, it surged 345.15 points or 1.43 per cent to 24,337.70.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Adani Ports and Power Grid climbed over 3 per cent each. Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti, and Larsen & Toubro were the other big gainers.

IndusInd Bank, Bharti Airtel, Hindustan Unilever, Tech Mahindra and Titan were the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,531.24 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

DIIs bought equities worth Rs 3,357.45 crore on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 1.12 per cent to USD 77.34 a barrel.

Falling for the third straight day on Tuesday, the BSE benchmark settled at 78,593.07, down 166.33 points or 0.21 per cent. Similarly, the Nifty declined 63.05 points or 0.26 per cent to settle below the 24,000 level at 23,992.55.

—*PTI*

GST REGISTRATION FAILURE

Pan masala makers to pay ₹1 lakh penalty from 1 Oct

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Manufacturers of such tobacco products are required to furnish the details of packing machines being used for filling in Form GST SRM-I **PHOTO: PTI**

The government has notified 1 October as the date for implementation of the penalty provision for manufacturers of pan masala and similar tobacco products, if they fail to register their packing machinery with GST authorities.

The GST Network had earlier in May and June notified two forms GST SRM-I and II for registering machines used by such manufacturers and to report inputs procured and corresponding outputs with tax authorities.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on 6 August notified 1 October, 2024, as the date for levy of up to Rs 1 lakh penalty for failure to register their packing machines with GST authorities.

In January, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) had announced the introduction of a new registration and monthly return filing procedure to improve GST compliance for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products effective April 1.

The date was later extended till 15 May.

The move to overhaul the registration, record-keeping, and monthly filing of such businesses was aimed at improving Goods and Service Tax (GST) compliance for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products.

The procedure was to be applicable for manufacturers of pan-masala, unmanufactured tobacco (without lime tube) with or without brand name, 'Hookah' or 'gudaku' tobacco, smoking mixtures for pipes and cigarettes, chewing tobacco (without lime tube), filter khaini, jarda scented tobacco, snuff and branded or unbranded 'Gutkha', etc.

The manufacturers of such tobacco products are required to furnish the details of packing machines being used for filling and packing of packages in Form GST SRM-I, electronically within 30 days of the notification coming into effect i.e., 1 April, 2024. —*PTI*

> The GST Network had earlier in May and June notified two forms GST SRM-I and II for registering machines used by such manufacturers and to report inputs procured and corresponding outputs with tax authorities

India starts portal to facilitate visa for Chinese techies

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

PHOTO: ANI

A portal to facilitate business visas for Chinese technicians, whose expertise are required in Indian manufacturing firms in the PLI sector, has started functioning, a senior government official said on Wednesday.

The move assumes significance as some domestic manufacturing firms have flagged the issue of delay in getting visas for Chinese technicians, who are required for works like installation or repair of certain machines, besides training workers in India.

"The portal started last week only. It is to streamline the process where business visas will be given to Chinese technicians in the PLI sector," the official said.

The official added that the home affairs ministry has held interaction with different departments to sensitise and train them in how the portal will be used.

Investments by Chinese firms in India are subject to greater scrutiny after the issuance of Press Note 3 by the government in April 2020.

These countries are China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan. As per that decision, FDI proposals from these countries need government approval for investments in India in any sector. —*PTI*

BY 1 APRIL, 2025

Firms with multiple branches must register under GST's ISD

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has now notified 1 April, 2025, as the cut-off date for all companies **PHOTO: ANI**

Companies having presence in multiple states and distributing common input tax credit with branch offices will have to register as Input Service Distributor (ISD) with GST authorities by 1 April, 2025.

Through the Finance Bill, 2024, in February, the government had amended Goods and Services Tax (GST) law to say that businesses having multi-state GST registration will have to have themselves mandatorily registered as ISD to distribute among its branches any input tax credit (ITC) for services availed.

The mechanism for sharing of ITC is prescribed in GST rules and broadly the common ITC is apportioned in the ratio of turnover of different branches having same PAN.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has now notified 1 April, 2025, as the cut-off date for all companies with multi-state branches to register as ISD.

KPMG in India Partner and Head Indirect Tax Abhishek Jain said the government has given a reasonable period of implementation of ISD provisions allowing companies sufficient time to prepare thoroughly". —*PTI*

Tata Power, DGPC to set up hydro project in Bhutan

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Tata Power and Bhutan-based Druk Green Power Corporation Ltd (DGPC) have partnered to develop a hydropower project at an estimated cost of Rs 6,900 crore.

The 600 megawatt (MW) Khorlochhu Hydropower Project will be built on the Kholongchhu river in easten Bhutan, Tata Power said in a statement on Wednesday.

The clean power from the project will help meet Bhutan's increasing electricity requirements and complement and contribute to India's energy transition to renewables, it said.

The estimated project cost, including financing charges is around Rs 6,900 crore with a construction timeline of 5 years, Tata Power said adding all the statutory approvals are in place for construction work to start. —*PTI*

Ambani draws nil salary for 4th yr in a row

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani drew nil salary from his oil-to-telecom-and-retail conglomerate Reliance Industries for the fourth straight year in a row while his children earned a sitting fee and a commission for being on the board of India's most valuable company.

Ambani, 67, had capped his annual remuneration at Rs 15 crore from financial year 2008-09 (April 2008 to March 2009) to 2019-20 (FY20); and since FY21, he opted to forego his salary, due to COVID-19 pandemic, until the company and all its businesses were fully back to their earnings potential.

In 2023-24, he got 'nil' as salary, allowances, and perquisites as well as retiral benefits, according to the latest annual report of the company.

Ambani, who has been on the board of Reliance since 1977 and was elevated as chairman of the company after the death of his father and group patriarch Dhiburhai Ambani in July 2002, was just last year re-appointed as the head of Reliance for another five-year term till April 2029 - a period during which he opted to draw nil salary.

—*PTI*

TRAI TO REVIEW, TIGHTEN RULES TO CURB SPAM CALLS: LAHOTI

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Telecom regulator will review and strengthen regulations to curb pesky, spam calls, TRAI Chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti said on Wednesday.

The crackdown on pesky calls has figured high on the agenda of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, and the regulator has been hardening its stance on the issue, amid rising consumer complaints around unsolicited communications from unauthorised telemarketers.

"We had an interaction with service providers on spam calls and that is the next thing on our table. We will work seriously...we will plug any loopholes that people are finding on existing regulations to tighten (the checks on) spam call issue," Lahoti said on the sidelines of India SatCom 2024 organised by Broadband India Forum (BIF).

—*PTI*

Amazon allies with NGOs, trade bodies to help artisans

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

E-commerce major Amazon India on Wednesday said that it has partnered with over 45 government emporiums, NGOs, and trade bodies in India to bridge the gap between artisans and customers, providing economic opportunities for marginalized weaving communities.

"Customers can shop for over 1.5 lakh products featured from 25 states depicting regional various crafts of India," said a company statement.

More than 2,500 master weavers, co-operatives, artisans and government organisations under various ministries like Textiles, Cottage Industries, and Tribal Welfare, among others have been on-boarded on Amazon.in to sell online, according to the statement. —*PTI*

Zomato customers can get COD balance to their accounts

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Zomato customers can now ask for the balance amount, if any, of cash on delivery orders to be added to their 'Zomato Money' account, and utilise it for placing future orders or dining out, CEO Deepinder Goyal said on Wednesday.

He thanked Tata Group firm BigBasket for the inspiration behind the solution.

"For cash on delivery orders, finding exact change can sometimes be inconvenient. Starting today, our customers can pay delivery partners in cash, and ask for the balance amount to be added instantly to their Zomato Money account.

This balance can be used towards future delivery orders or dining out," Goyal said in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

"Thank you @bigbasket_com for the inspiration for this solution, and our delivery partners (three of them are working as product managers with us) for insisting that we develop this asap," the Zomato CEO added.

The online food delivery firm announced a significant increase in its consolidated net profit last week, reaching Rs 253 crore for the quarter ended June 2024, from Rs 2 crore during the same period last year. —*PTI*

Tesla recalls more than 1.6M cars in China for software fix

BEIJING, 7 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Tesla is recalling 1.68 million cars in China for a remote software upgrade to ensure that they warn the driver when the trunk is not locked shut, China's market regulator said.

The announcement late Tuesday also said that vehicles with faulty trunk latches will be repaired free of charge. The recalls affect some imported Model S and Model X vehicles and domestically made Model 3 and Model Y cars manufactured between 15 October, 2020, 17 July, 2024.

The recall notice said that an unlocked trunk lid could open during driving, interfering with the driver's vision. The US-based electric vehicle maker will fix the problem through a remote software upgrade, the State Administration for Market Regulation said.

China is a major market and production base for Tesla while also a source of growing competition from Chinese EV makers. The company reported a sharp decline in second-quarter net income last month, as sales fell despite price cuts and low-interest financing. —*PTI*

TECH LAYOFFS

In AI shift, Dell sacks 12K workers

NEW DELHI, 7 AUG

Dell's workforce is expected to fall below 1,00,000, down from 1,20,000 **PHOTO: ANI**

Dell Technologies has announced a second round of layoffs in the past 15 months. The company has fired around 12,500 employees, which is about 10 per cent of its workforce. The latest move is its strategy to better focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and modern IT solutions.

This reduction aims to streamline operations and prioritise investments in areas that will drive future growth. The layoffs are part of a broader reorganisation aimed at prioritising investments in AI and modern IT solutions. Dell aims to outpace market growth by using AI to unlock new value for customer organisations.

The decision was communicated through a memo by Bill Scannell, President of Global Sales and Customer Operations, and John Byrne, Global Channels President. They highlighted the need to "streamline layers of management" and hinted at the painful but necessary steps to drive future growth. Employees were notified of the layoffs through HR exit meetings, with some finding out through rescheduled one-on-one meetings.

Affected employees are reportedly being offered severance packages that include two months' wages plus an additional week per year of service, up to a maximum of 26 weeks. However, there has been discontent among long-term employees over the loss of incentives and stock options.

This round of layoffs follows a trend of workforce reductions at Dell, including a notable reduction of around 13,000 employees in the 2023 fiscal year. With the current layoffs, Dell's workforce is expected to fall below 100,000, down from 120,000. —*Agencies*

COUNTRIES				
1. US	24	32	32	88
2. China	23	22	16	61
3. Aus	17	12	10	39
4. France	13	16	19	48
64. India	0	0	3	3

Tough challenge awaits Chopra in his bid for another piece of history

His throw is not only his season best but also the best among others

PARIS, 7 AUG

His stunning monster throw of 89.34m in the qualification round made quite a statement but a tough challenge awaits defending champion Neeraj Chopra as he seeks another piece of history in the Paris Olympics men's javelin throw final round here on Thursday.

Just like he did at the same stage in the Tokyo Olympics three years back, Chopra needed just a few seconds to top the qualification round with his opening throw but the similarity ends there.

This time, the quality of the field is better than Tokyo with nine throwers crossing the automatic final round qualification mark of 84m in Paris as against six in Tokyo. Out of the nine, five made it to the final round with their first throws and thus will have a lot in their tanks for the medal round. The 26-year-old Chopra knows it too well, having been in the global circuit for more than eight years.

"In the final, everyone has a different mindset and different situation. It will be a good competition. Whoever qualifies automatically is the best in preparation," Neeraj said.

If he wins gold, and for that matter a medal, he will become the most decorated Indian in Olympics in individual sport. Chopra will have a chance to become only the fifth man in Olympic javelin throw history to defend the title.

His 89.34m throw may also raise hopes of millions of Indian fans to see Chopra cross the elusive 90m mark on Thursday. His effort was also the second-best qualifying throw at an Olympics after the 89.39m registered by the legendary Jan Zelezny at 2000 Sydney Games.

—PTI

Imane Khelif **PHOTO: REDDIT**

ALGERIANS RALLY BEHIND GOLD HOPEFUL KHELIF

AIN MESBAH, 7 AUG

Relatives and neighbours erupted in cheers on Tuesday when Algeria's Imane Khelif advanced to the Olympic final in women's boxing, winning a clear unanimous decision over Janjaem Suwannapheng of Thailand.

In Ain Mesbah, the rural cinderblock-built town where the boxer was raised, legions of supporters convened on her uncle's home to watch Khelif's match. With news camera lights shining on the gathering, they drank orange juice, waved flags and whistled as Khelif jumped around the ring in excitement about advancing to Friday's gold medal match.

"Between the quarterfinals and the semifinals, we were on edge," said Rachid Khelif, referencing the wave of uninformed speculation about his niece's gender. "We were afraid that these attacks would affect her psychologically. But thank God, we saw Imane in a good state of mind."

Few Algerians could have imagined that a 25-year-old welder's daughter from the drought-stricken Tiaret region could unite the population in such a way. But the Muslim-majority country has largely interpreted the backlash against Khelif as an attack on the nation rather than within the context of the debate underway in many Western nations about gender, sex and sports.

In the North African nation's newspapers, on television and all over social media, Khelif has become a hometown hero, celebrated for her successes and defended amid misconceptions about her gender and scrutiny over her eligibility to compete. *—AP*

KEY EVENTS

ATHLETICS | 1.13 PM

MEN'S 3000M, FINAL

Avinash Sable

MEN'S JAVELIN THROW, FINAL | 11.55 PM

Neeraj Chopra, 26, Haryana

After a monster throw of 89.34m in the qualification round a tough challenge awaits for the defending champion Chopra

GOLF | 12.30 PM

WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL, ROUND 2

Diksha Dagar, 23, Hayana

HOCKEY | 5.30 PM

MEN'S TOURNAMENT- BRONZE MEDAL MATCH

India vs Spain

MANU IS BACK

Double Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker with her coach Jaspal Rana being welcomed as she arrives in New Delhi on Wednesday, after her historic performance in Paris Olympics 2024. She won bronze medals in Women's 10m Air Pistol and 10m Air Pistol Mixed team event **PHOTO: ANI**

Paris 2024 launches charitable initiatives

PARIS, 7 AUG

It is quite literally the food of champions. Paris Olympics organisers are determined that it not go to waste.

Food that goes uneaten at the Games — by the athletes, the spectators and the workers — is helping those in need around the French capital, part of an effort to cut down on waste and contribute to organizers' commitment to sustainability. Paris 2024 organizers have long said the Games would be more environmentally friendly, including reusable dishes in the main restaurant at the athletes' village, greener construction and seats in venues made from recycled materials. In addition to helping those in need, organizers also hope the food donations will set an example for other Olympics and major events to follow.

"This is part of the legacy that we've been working on since the beginning," said Georgina Grenon, who oversees the Paris Games' effort to reduce its carbon footprint by half compared to London in 2012 and Rio in 2016. "We've been working to try to change the way in which these Games are organised, both for us but also for other events. And food waste is one of those things." *—AP*

VINESH DISQUALIFED

WFI demands action against support staff

Indian Olympics Association President PT Usha meets wrestler Vinesh Phogat in the hospital in Paris on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

PARIS, 7 AUG

The Wrestling Federation of India President Sanjay Singh on Wednesday demanded action against the support staff attached with Vinesh Phogat in the wake of her shock exit from the Paris Olympics, saying the blunder of not maintaining her weight before the final was not acceptable.

The Indian contingent woke up to the rude jolt of Vinesh's disqualification, hours before her gold medal bout against American Sarah Hildebrandt. She was found overweight by 100 grams on day two of the weigh-in and resultantly disqualified.

Cuban wrestler Guzman Lopez Yusnelis, who had lost her semifinal to Vinesh, will now clash in the gold medal match against Hildebrandt. Vinesh has been training with Woller Akos, her personal coach from Belgium and has also worked with South African mental conditioning coach Wayne Lombard.

"They should have paid attention to her all the time to ensure nothing of this sort happens. How this happened and how she went over the weight limit must be looked into.

"I request the Government of India to take action against all those responsible," he said.

Vinesh had opted to train with Akos and the government of India had cleared his travel along with Vinesh for the Games. Akos, like the Indian national coaches, was granted full-access accreditation.

It cannot be denied that Akos has played a key role in reshaping Vinesh's game. He has been working with the star Indian wrestler since 2018, bringing in technical and tactical changes to her game. Vinesh has won two World Championship bronze medals with him. *—PTI*

Brazil set up final against US with a 4-2 win

MARSEILLE, 7 AUG

Brazil will meet the United States in the final of the Olympic women's soccer tournament after beating world champion Spain 4-2.

Gabi Portilho and Adriana struck at Stade de Marseille after an own goal from Irene Paredes had put the two-time silver medalist in an early lead. Victory means Brazil great Marta should get the chance to end her glittering international career by competing for gold after being suspended for the quarterfinals and semifinals.

The 38-year-old Marta has said her sixth Olympics will be her last major tournament with the national team. Spain won't get the chance in Paris to further cement its place at the top of women's soccer by adding Olympic gold to the World Cup it won last year.

Paredes' sixth-minute own goal put Brazil in control and Portilho doubled the advantage in the fourth minute of first-half stoppage time. Adriana's header in 71st underlined Brazil's dominance.

Salma Paralluelo pulled a goal back for Spain with a header in the 85th and almost immediately Alexia Putellas struck the bar with a shot from outside the area. *—AP*

NETHERLANDS WOMEN REACH 6TH STRAIGHT FINAL

PARIS, 7 AUG

The Netherlands reached their sixth successive Olympic women's hockey final with a 3-0 thrashing of Argentina in Paris. Luna Noa Fokke put the Dutch ahead in the 21st minute before Laura Nunnink doubled the lead shortly before half-time. Yibbi Jansen then scored from a penalty corner in the third quarter to all-but seal their place in the final. A convincing performance from the defending champions, who dominated in possession throughout, while Argentina missed all 12 of their shots at goal. *—BBC News*

IN TEARS

Panghal's campaign ends as repechage hopes dashed

Antim Panghal in action **PHOTO: PTI**

PARIS, 7 AUG

India's biggest wrestling medal hope at the Paris Games, Antim Panghal ended her Olympic campaign with a humiliating 0-10 defeat to Turkey's Yetgil Zeynep in the women's 53 kg category.

The 19-year-old debutant's hope of remaining in contention for a bronze medal via repechage were also dashed after Zeynep lost to Annika Wendle of Germany in the quarterfinals.

Earlier, World Championships bronze medallist Antim, who was one of the first to gain an Olympic quota in the category earlier owned by Vinesh Phogat, was outclassed in 101 seconds in the first round. The Turkish wrestler emerged victorious by virtue of "Technical Superiority" where she had a clear 10-point lead over her Indian opponent. Zeynep was in complete control as she first pinned Antim for two points, followed by another two and then performed a double flip to get four points. *—PTI*

BOXING

Swaminathan, Bagri make main draw of WI Billiards

MUMBAI, 7 AUG

Vinay Swaminathan and Anurag Bagri won their respective third-round matches in senior snooker to qualify for the main draw of the Western India Billiards and Snooker Championships. Swaminathan potted steadily defeated Railways' Aditya Agrawal 4-0 (67-31, 47-16, 60-53, and 45-7), while Bagri got the better of Mahabaleshwar's Pankaj Kadam 4-0 (65-15, 58-41, 53-42, and 56-44). In second round, Gujarat's Parth Shah played well to defeat Mumbai's Nikhil Bhansali 4-2 (62-52, 59-14, 72-65, 52-65, 32-53, and 62-11). *—PTI*

AHEAD OF EPL

Morata & Rodri banned for 'Gibraltar is Spanish' chant

ROME, 7 AUG

Spain captain Alvaro Morata and team-mate Rodri have been banned for one game by Uefa after they chanted "Gibraltar is Spanish" during their side's Euro 2024 victory celebrations.

The Gibraltar Football Association made an official complaint about the celebrations to European football's governing body before the pair were charged.

Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) has now suspended Morata and Rodri "for failing to comply with the general principles of conduct, for violating the basic rules of decent conduct, for using sporting events for manifestations of a non-sporting nature and for bringing the sport of football, and UEFA in particular, into disrepute".

They are banned for Spain's next game, which is against Serbia on Thursday, 5 September. Gibraltar is an enclave at Spain's southern tip that has been under British rule since the 18th century, and Spain has long called for its return.

caption **PHOTO: X@BBCSport**

The chanting took place in front of tens of thousands of Spain fans in Cibeles Square, Madrid on 15 July as players celebrated their 2-1 Euro 2024 final victory over England. Manchester City midfielder Rodri, 28, could be seen chanting "Gibraltar is Spanish" on the stage, and AC Milan striker Morata, 31, later encouraged the crowd to join in with the same chant.

The Gibraltar FA complained about Spain's behaviour, saying it had "noted the extremely provocative and insulting nature of the celebrations around the Spanish men's national team winning Euro 2024".

"Football has no place for behaviour of this nature," it added. Gibraltar has been a full member of UEFA since 2013. *—BBC News*

PHOTO: X@LTSURENKO

LESIA TSURENKO BEATS BIANCA IN NAT'L BANK OPEN

TORONTO, 7 AUG

Bianca Andreescu's strong start turned into an early exit to her first hard-court tournament of the year, as the Canadian was beaten 0-6, 6-3, 6-4 by Lesia Tsurenko on Tuesday night at the National Bank Open.

Andreescu won her home tournament in her 2019 season that was highlighted later by the U.S. Open title. But she hadn't played on hard courts since Montreal last year, ending her season because of a back injury and not returning until this year's French Open. *—AP*

Lanka crush India by 110 runs to win ODI series 2-0

COLOMBO, 7 AUG

Sri Lanka crushed India by 110 runs in the third ODI here on Wednesday to clinch a commanding 2-0 win in the three-match series.

The hosts had earlier won the second ODI by 32 runs after the first ended in a thrilling tie. Chasing 249, India once again began well but crumbled against Sri Lankan spinners as Dunith Wellalage (5.1-0-27-5) led the attack for the island nation with a fine spell.

India were bowled out for 138 in 26.1 overs with skipper Rohit Sharma (35) and Washington Sundar (30) waging lone battles. Earlier, all-rounder Riyan Parag took 3 for 54 on debut but Sri Lanka still managed a competitive 248 for 7 riding on Avishka Fernando's composed 96 and Kusal Mendis's well-compiled 59.

Bowling his off-breaks, Riyan denied Fernando a well-deserved century. His 102-ball innings had nine fours and two sixes. *—PTI*

Sri Lanka's Jeffrey Vandersay celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of India's Shivam Dube **PHOTO: PTI**